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The Shape of Things

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THE ATTITUDE OF THE AVERAGE TENANT in New York has been an important factor in making the building-service strike one of the most orderly lessons in class consciousness New York has ever seen. There were other elements even more important. There was first of all a strong union with efficient leadership making reasonable demands for overburdened, underpaid workers; there was a city administration which declared an emergency under the health regulations but kept clear of any strike-breaking moves in the name of law and order; there was finally the Realty Advisory Board, which assumed the black role of villain. The board refused to arbitrate, called in the notorious Bergoff band at nine or ten dollars a day, and in general put on such a demonstration of high-handedness that many of its owner members deserted and capitulated to the enemy. Meanwhile with a few exceptions the tenants, who as the "outraged public" might have broken the strike forthwith, remained passive or took up the defense of "the boys" who make life easier in a thousand ways for \$70 or \$80 a month. In the agreements signed so far the union has in some cases won the closed shop; in general it has obtained the raise demanded, the preferential shop, a board of arbitration to adjust differences, and a promise of non-discrimination. The owners have given the public a fine example of refusal to arbitrate; they have also provided a nice exhibit of strike-breakers, complete with mugs, police records, and lengths of iron pipe. There is even the story of one landlord who hastily accepted the closed shop when he saw the gentlemen sent to "protect" his property. "My God," he said, "I'm afraid of 'em myself."

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EARL BROWDER AND JOSEPH STALIN EACH discussed communism last week. Stalin talked to Roy Howard about Russian preparedness for a Japanese or German attack, about the capitalist roots of war, and about the much-discussed non-propaganda provisions of the Litvinov agreement with Roosevelt. Unfortunately, on the absorbing topic of Russian democracy whole passages quoted in the stenographic report were omitted from Mr. Howard's account. While some of it savored of official Communist apologetics, the interview as a whole was vigorous and forthright, and would bear comparison with the recent radio address of the new English king. Mr. Browder's speech was undoubtedly a disappointment to those who expect a Communist leader to have a hundred

heads like Cerberus, each of them spitting fire. Eugene Paley, of the Columbia Broadcasting Company, must be commended for his courage in withstanding the hysterical protests of red-baiters who shuddered at the thought that through a national hook-up Browder's speech would reach millions. The incident was not without its humor. Outside the broadcasting office pickets from the Americanization League marched with sartorial splendor, wearing spats and silk mufflers to show how the well-dressed picket should be turned out, and carrying banners that read starkly, "Smash Communism." But inside, in a voice as soft-spoken and "fireside" as Roosevelt's, Browder was saying that "every great crisis in American history has required a new party to solve it," and calling for the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party with an immediate program of gradualism—trade unionism, social security, Negro rights, a Supreme Court curb. Ultimately of course the impetus toward a Farmer-Labor Party must come from the farmers and workers rather than from any existing party. Meanwhile support must be welcomed from any group that is genuinely willing to explore the possibilities of economic change through electoral processes.

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THE PRESIDENT OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY was a member of a delegation which appeared before the legislative committee on education on March 5 and urged the repeal of the Massachusetts teachers' oath law. Dr. Conant was accompanied by Presidents Neilson of Smith College, Cousens of Tufts, and Marsh of Boston University, and they brought representations from the heads of Radcliffe, Wheaton, Amherst, Williams, and Mount Holyoke. The temper of the legislative committee, especially that of Representative Frederick T. McDermott of Medford, was uniformly hostile. Dr. Conant was commanded to answer yes or no to the question, "Are there any Communists at Harvard?" Mr. Neilson, amid laughter and cheers from the audience, among whom there were many college students, was forced to deny that he was connected with the University of Moscow. A "Patriots' Handbook of Who's Who Among American Radicals" was frequently consulted by Representative McDermott in an attempt to fix the "Communist" status of the protesting educators. Most significant, however, was the frank admission by J. Raymond Walsh, professor of economics at Harvard, and John D. Connors of New Bedford that the teacher's oath had already forced teachers to pull their punches in presenting to their students material dealing with labor unions and politics. The college presidents were joined by representatives of the Teachers' Union, the A. F. of L., the State Federation of Labor, and various parents' and teachers' organizations.

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THE QUALITY OF MERCY, AND THAT OF justice as well, was decidedly strained last week in the decision of the highest New York court—the Court of Appeals—declaring the minimum-wage law for women unconstitutional. We have grown hardened to catastrophic decisions, but this was flagrant and mechanical. It hap-

pened to involve the laundry industry, which is notoriously ill-paid, long-houred, exploited. The workers are principally Negro women. Their work is unskilled; cut-throat competition abounds in the industry; the firms are small and many; union organization is weak. It was no utopian whim but sheer pressing social necessity that led to the enactment of the minimum-wage law three years ago in the depth of the depression. The framers of the statute remembered that the Supreme Court had declared a minimum-wage law valid in 1917, in *Muller vs. Oregon*, but held against another in 1923 in *Adkins vs. Children's Hospital*. They remembered also that the latter case had left a loophole. They drew their statute accordingly, prefacing it by an elaborate finding of fact as to the nature of women's employment in industry and providing that wage boards be set up in each industry to study its peculiar conditions. Six states followed suit with similar statutes. Now the Court of Appeals in a four-to-three decision, speaking through Chief Judge Frederick Crane, bases itself flatly on the *Adkins* case, fails to see any substantial difference between the two statutes, and undoes the entire work of the legislature. Speaking for the minority, Judge Lehman makes out an impressive case for the statute. The "liberty of contract" that Judge Crane seeks to protect is of course the liberty to exploit and be exploited. It is the liberty of the workers to return to sweatshop conditions and starvation wages—to ten dollars a week instead of the thirteen dollars which had been achieved for them.

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RAILWAY LABOR, WHICH HAS SEEN ITS RANKS diminished by more than a million since 1920, faces further displacement as a result of the mergers of railroad facilities, particularly terminals, ordered by the coordinator of transportation. The order has been temporarily deferred. Meanwhile representatives of railway management and the heads of twenty-one unions are trying to reach an agreement on the protection of workers who may be eliminated by such mergers. Section 7 of the Emergency Transportation Act bars railroad economies which would result in less employment than existed in 1933, but that act expires on June 16. On March 4 there was introduced in Congress the Wheeler-Crosser bill, which stipulates that the carrier must provide for those displaced "comparable employment under no less favorable conditions" or adequate compensation. On March 8 President Roosevelt addressed to both sides a letter in which he strongly urged settlement by negotiation rather than by legislation, implying his disapproval of the pending bill. The history of labor and industry demonstrates the folly of seeking to combat the forces that operate in a declining industry. The railways differ from the ordinary industry, however, in that they are under public control. This places a special responsibility on the government to see that any workers who are eliminated in the interest of efficiency receive adequate compensation. We are glad to note that Joseph B. Eastman, the coordinator, seems prepared to use his influence toward this end. The President assuredly should back him up.

THE FIRST REACTION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES to the choice of Koki Hirota as the new Premier of Japan has been one of relief. Although closely associated with the reactionary Black Dragon Society, Hirota at least appreciates the need for conciliating world opinion. He has not occupied a position of leadership in the fascist movement as has General Araki or Baron Hiranuma, both of whom were mentioned as possible candidates for the Premiership. Yet if there was any doubt that Japan would adopt a more aggressive foreign policy as a result of the Tokyo revolt, that doubt has been laid at rest by recent developments in China. Hachiro Arita, the new Japanese Ambassador, has informed Nanking that the sending of government troops into Shansi to combat the growing red "menace" will be permitted only in accordance with the third of Hirota's "three points." Since this point calls for Sino-Japanese "cooperation" against the Communists, the statement implies that Japan is planning to send its own troops into the interior on the pretext of combating bolshevism. On this occasion the pretext is a fairly convincing one. The appearance of a considerable red force in the North along the borders of Inner Mongolia has given Japan real cause for concern. From their new base the Chinese soviet troops could easily cut the Japanese lines of communication at Kalgan, the gateway to Outer Mongolia, and could probably establish communications with the sovietized Mongolian People's Republic. But the pressure that is being brought on Nanking and the report of a Japanese-fomented separatist movement in Fukien indicate that Japan is moving forward irrespective of the Red Army. Militarism appears to be more firmly than ever in the saddle at Tokyo.

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THE FIG LEAF HAS NOW COME TO THE university campus. From an exhibition of American painting at the University of Wyoming, five nude studies—the work of Emil Ganso, Bernard Karfiol, Kuniyishi, David Morrison, and Jules Pascin—were removed by order of the president, Dr. Arthur Griswold Crane. The art studios where the exhibit was held are used by training-school classes of grade and high-school pupils, and Dr. Crane at first justified his action on the ground that he had received "numerous complaints" from parents who did not wish their children to see the paintings. Temporarily the pictures were placed in a room open to adult students only, but later they were removed from view altogether, Dr. Crane then explaining that his objection to them "was not because they were nude but because they were ugly and out of taste for an educational exhibit." In so doing the president based his decision on a question of taste, although he has confessed, even boasted, that he is out of his depth in matters pertaining to the fine arts. One might commend him for his honesty were it not that his position in the present instance has permitted him to translate his own aesthetic prejudices into a moral mandate and impose it upon 1,200 students and a community of 10,000. This is significant not as an isolated phenomenon but as it reflects the acts of dozens of other President Cranes in the seats of power in American higher education.

A New Watch on the Rhine

BY moving troops into the Rhineland in violation of the Locarno pact, Hitler has precipitated a crisis far graver in its implications than that which followed his rearmament announcement of a year ago. Rearmament had been under way for several years, and its announcement merely brought into the open a fact which had overshadowed European diplomacy ever since the Nazis' seizure of power. But the present step, timed to forestall any possibility of further sanctions against Italy, appears to be a deliberate attempt to destroy the foundations of international organization. The reasons for it are clearly set forth in Hitler's dramatic Reichstag address. There is the old question of German prestige, the passion for equality which has characterized every official utterance since the war. But even more marked is the implacable hatred of Soviet communism. Rightly or wrongly, Hitler has taken the position that Europe is not large enough for both bolshevism and fascism, and in the supreme task of uprooting communism he has come to look upon the Franco-Soviet pact, the League, and Germany's international obligations merely as so many obstacles to success.

The crisis is gravely complicated by the fact that Mussolini and Hitler are now in a position where they can play the powers against one another. While it may seem somewhat cynical to assume that both Germany's offer of a twenty-five-year non-aggression pact with France and Italy's acceptance of the League's peace proposals are wholly insincere, the fact remains that both men have consistently scorned all principle in international relationships. Il Duce very obviously hopes that the preoccupation of the powers with the new Nazi peril will lead them to forget their solemn obligation to see that Italy does not profit from its aggression in Ethiopia. And there is a strong possibility that his hopes will be realized. As the country primarily affected by the militarization of the Rhineland, France has indicated a willingness to make substantial concessions to obtain a guaranty of Italian support. Great Britain, on the other hand, appears to favor giving way to Germany in order to assure a firm stand against Italy in case the latter's promise to discuss peace terms comes to nothing. The danger is that both France and Britain may be forced into concessions which will be tantamount to scrapping the principles of collective organization in favor of a new system of alliances.

From the standpoint of collective security, firmness toward Mussolini would seem the surest way of preventing Hitler from launching his widely heralded drive toward the Soviet Ukraine. Informed observers agree that German rearmament has not yet reached the point where there is immediate threat of Nazi aggression. In the meantime France is amply protected by existing treaties. Final ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact of mutual assistance by the French Senate is a matter of days. The Little Entente has already indicated that it will cast its lot with France, and preliminary reports suggest that even Poland can be

counted on to support the League. While Mussolini might carry through his threat to abandon the Stresa front, this loss would be more than offset by the increased certainty of support from a rearmed Britain. Even the United States would probably throw its influence behind a League that took its obligations seriously.

Despite the logic of this position, the chances are against its adoption. In a situation as complex as the present one, statesmen are prone to fall back on traditional methods, even though these measures are bound to lead to war. But this does not mean that we should give way to despair. No one anticipated that the League would meet the challenge of the Italian-Ethiopian conflict as effectively as it did. Its action was due not so much to the League statesmen as to an overwhelming popular sentiment against war. Perhaps it is too much to expect another such spontaneous expression of public opinion as that which rose against the Hoare-Laval peace pact. But something approaching that demonstration is vitally necessary if the principles of collective security are to be preserved in the face of the latest desperate maneuvers of the fascist war-makers.

Who Are the Tyrants?

CHARGES of tyranny are being hurled thick as brickbats at the Roosevelt Administration. Whether they have broken any campaign bones remains to be seen. But they seem thus far to have included in their sweep every form of despotism, intimidation, and vindictiveness known to the mind of man. At present writing the latest incident is the turmoil over Senator Black's methods of tracking down lobby activities by seizing the records of telegrams and long-distance phone calls sent by various firms and organizations. In a diapason formed by the combined voices of Representative Wadsworth, Senator Steiwer, Silas Strawn, Jouett Shouse, Mark Sullivan, Walter Lippmann, Arthur Krock, the Hearst papers, and sundry corporation lawyers and utility executives, we are told that the Senator is a "Peeping Tom of public life," a bounder, an inquisitor into the private affairs of peaceful and liberty-loving citizens, an engine of the Star Chamber, a Torquemada.

These are grim charges. But they are only part of a long succession. Before the Black incident there was the incident of General Hagood. Earlier there was the lively dispute about the so-called Democratic tyranny over the radio waves. Still earlier there was the pother over the Morgan investigation. What charge will follow the Black incident must be left on the lap of the gods, but in our mortal way we may be certain that it will have to be pretty "hot" in order to avoid an anti-climax. It is undoubtedly the hope of Republican campaign strategists that these charges of tyranny will find lodgment in the minds of the voters as part of a pattern the other elements of which are the charges of communism, of designs against the Constitution, of a corrupt use of relief funds, and finally of reckless expenditures and bureaucratic waste.

Since Woodrow Wilson's "new freedom," publicity has been the principal instrument relied upon for the control of corporate activities. We do not ourselves subscribe to Mr. Wilson's faith in the unaided force of publicity—a faith that seems to be shared by Senator Black, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Securities Exchange Commission. In the bewildering barrage of events today the public's memory is a short one, and publicity is useful mainly in so far as it leads to more drastic regulatory measures. But even publicity seems to our industrialists a veritable nightmare of control. For example, the proposal to extend the publicity powers of the Federal Trade Commission has evoked from Elisha Hanson the charge that we are witnessing the formation of an American Ogpu.

Behind the opposing campaign strategies of the two parties there are certain issues of constitutional freedom that cannot be neglected. The Fourth Amendment guarantees the American people freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures on the part of the federal government. There is undoubtedly a point at which the powers of inquiry become arbitrary. Walter Lippmann is greatly agitated as to what will happen if we surrender to Senatorial investigating committees the right to subpoena telegrams and business records in a general way, and to rake witnesses over the coals in committee hearings. Adopting the long historical perspective for which he has become so notable, he sees a Star Chamber in every committee room. He identifies the cause of the men who by their own admission forged thousands of signatures on telegrams protesting against the Wheeler-Rayburn holding-company bill with the battles that have been fought in the past and will be fought in the future for freedom of speech and press. He points out that it is not only holding-company lobbyists but also liberals and trade unionists who must fear the tyranny of the legislative inquisition.

In his solicitude to lump together all kinds of freedoms and tyrannies Mr. Lippmann fails to see that the real connecting or dividing principle is their economic base. The anti-radical campaigns of 1919 and 1935-36 have not been accidents of history. The authors of the red-baiting investigations—Lusk and Fish, Kramer and McCormack, Ives and Dorgan—are merely the spearhead of a movement for which the real momentum is furnished by the men in corporations who stand to gain by a return to power. It is the Liberty Leagues and the Sentinels of America, the Chambers of Commerce and the Manufacturers' Associations—the very groups now being investigated—which furnish the economic base for the anti-radical campaigns. Without them those campaigns would have little sinister in them, and would be merely the fantastic exercises of the imagination of cranks and fools. What Senator Black is doing, therefore, constitutes not an arbitrary violation of liberty but one of the indispensable paths to liberty. There are still a few men in Congress who are taking seriously the task of economic control, who know that the only thing that will have effectiveness as against the massed force of wealth is the massed power of the federal government.

Who are the tyrants? They are not these few Congressmen, supported sporadically by the Administration. They are rather the industrialists who talk about privacy and

freedom from tyranny but who utter their Olympian words from seats of power to which they have risen by oppression and monopoly. We wish we could understand the mentality of people like Mr. Lippmann and Mr. Krock. Do they really think men like Mr. Strawn and Mr. Raskob are champions of the dear and cherished liberties of our Western heritage? Do they prefer to listen to the words rather than to observe the behavior of the bankers and lawyers and munitions makers they are defending? Men who have for decades controlled the political as well as the economic fortunes of our country; men who are accustomed to the vocabulary of command; men who breathe the atmosphere of dominance and expect thousands in mines and factories and laboratories to jump to their bidding—these men are of course likely to sniff despotism on every breeze of government control. They ought to know about despotism, having had experience with their own.

But it is the function of the commentator not to be taken in. He ought not to confuse the struggles for freedom of speech with the attempts of big business to avoid regulation. He ought not to be so confused by historical analogy as to believe that like the Englishman's home every Western Union office is a Liberty League castle.

A Sound Tax

BOTH from a political and an economic standpoint, the President's proposed tax on undivided corporation profits represents masterly strategy. By advocating a substantial increase in taxation at this time Mr. Roosevelt has shrewdly cut the ground from under his opponents. He can go into the election with the prospect of a budget more clearly in balance than that of the Hoover Administration during its last two years in office and at the same time enjoy the political prestige that comes from having spent billions on unemployment and farm relief. Moreover, he has saved Congress from the painful necessity of imposing an income or sales impost on the eve of a national election. No tax could be devised which would be less likely to alienate the voters. Even the shareholders, if the stock market may be taken as a criterion, are so cheered by the prospect of increased disbursements that they are willing to overlook the fact that dividends are to be subject to the normal income tax.

That such a happy political choice should also be extraordinarily well adapted to correct one of the gravest defects in our economic structure is perhaps accidental but none the less fortunate. Recent studies have shown that one of the primary causes of the depression is to be found in the tendency toward oversaving on the part of wealthy individuals and corporations. In the case of individuals this tendency can be combated by progressive income, inheritance, and gift levies. The attempt to apply the principle of graduated taxation to corporations, however, has led to the preposterous plan of taxing them in accordance with size, which bears no relation either to a corporation's capacity to pay or to the soundness of its financial policies. The exemption of dividends from the normal tax on in-

dividual incomes has been an inducement to directors to retain as large a share of corporation earnings as possible in surplus accounts. During 1928 and 1929 these surpluses were deposited with the commercial banks, where they were used to swell brokers' loans, or were invested directly in the money market, where they served to intensify the speculative frenzy of the period. In recent years they have stagnated as excess bank reserves and thus constituted a serious threat to economic stability.

The proposed tax would not deprive corporations of ordinary working capital. Reserves would be allowed, as at present, for depreciation, obsolescence, and bad debt. Beyond that the corporations would be permitted and expected to accumulate as large surpluses as they required, but the tax should counterbalance the pressure from large shareholders to prevent the distribution of earnings because of a desire to hold down their personal taxes. Yet despite its adequate protection for legitimate business, the Administration's plan has been attacked by conservative banking interests on the ground that the maintenance of dividend payments out of corporation surpluses tends to cushion the shock of a depression. They point out, for example, that the existence of a large surplus enabled the American Telephone and Telegraph Company to maintain full dividend payments of \$9 a share throughout the depression, and argue that the cessation of such payments would have aggravated the crisis. From the standpoint of the individual corporation there would seem to be some justification for this contention. Obviously corporations which possessed a large undivided surplus in 1929 came through the depression with less difficulty than those which did not. But to assert that the country as a whole is better off because of the cautious policies of a few large concerns is to ignore the fact that the purchasing power withheld through excessive corporation reserves was one of the prime causes of the depression. It can scarcely be argued that a few stockholders are more important for maintaining consumer purchasing power than the recipients of government relief.

Back of the bankers' argument lies the old fallacy that a nation can lay aside money in good times for use in time of depression. Actually, of course, this is impossible. It is possible to store up such commodities as cotton, wheat, steel, and petroleum, but the attempt to hoard money, if generally practiced, can only result in disaster. Sound economic policy dictates a full distribution and use of current production as the only means of maintaining economic stability. In so far as the Administration's tax proposal will aid in that purpose, it has elements of real value.

This is not to suggest that we approve of the whole of the President's tax program. The reimposition of the processing taxes, even at a lower rate, imposes a burden on the masses which violates the first principle of sound taxation policy. Fortunately, however, these levies are to be temporary, while the tax on undivided profits is to be incorporated as a permanent portion of the tax structure. Although it does not eliminate the need for a drastic increase in the inheritance and income levies, it ranks as one of the few "reform" measures of the New Deal which bear the earmarks of forethought and careful preparation.

"Alt Heidelberg"

IN what should be the serenity and confidence of advanced age, the University of Heidelberg is the center of a furious academic controversy. Invitations have been issued by the Rector to a celebration of Heidelberg's 550th birthday on June 30 next. In a wave of apparently spontaneous protest against Nazi stifling of academic freedom, British universities began politely but firmly to decline, among them being Oxford and Cambridge, which can if they like boast of approximately 775 and 725 birthdays respectively. In retaliation Heidelberg merely made the belated and ineffectual gesture of withdrawing all British invitations.

So far American universities have shown no disposition to imitate the example of their British cousins. Cornell, Columbia, Vassar, and Harvard have already accepted. The latter based its acceptance on the following grounds: "The president and fellows . . . recognize the ancient ties by which the universities of the world are united and which are independent of the political conditions existing in any country at any particular time." History has shown and is showing today that there is no such independence as this promises. During the Reformation Heidelberg itself was a stronghold of Protestant learning; the Thirty Years' War inflicted damages on it from which it did not recover for 150 years. In our own time we have seen the Italian universities become the servants of the Fascist state. And today at Heidelberg forty-four professors have been dismissed since the accession of the Nazis to power because of "racial, religious, or political reasons." The ivory tower of learning is all too often painted with the color of the current political faith. Today in Germany it is emblazoned with the swastika.

Denials from Heidelberg that there has been any departure from the old liberal tradition are pitiful and hollow. It is claimed that professors of high standing continue to give the same sort of lectures as they gave before the Hitler putsch—provided they do not attack the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. It is asserted that several Heidelberg professors continue to teach *although they have Jewish wives*; it is declared that expelled Jewish professors who can establish the fact that they are only one-quarter Jewish have actually been invited to attend the celebration. More important even than these unendurable limitations on freedom of teaching, however, is the practical certainty that the Heidelberg anniversary celebration, like the Olympic Games at Garmish-Partenkirchen, will be made the occasion not for a salute to German scholarship and the pursuit of learning, which through the centuries have deserved the highest possible honor, but for a bombastic tribute to the Nazi state.

This is the best answer to Harvard's position. It is difficult to believe that the president and fellows of Harvard mean to imply that they recognize stronger ties with the culture that surrounds Heidelberg than with the culture that surrounds Oxford and Cambridge. Unless they mean that, it is better for free universities today to refrain from celebrating German culture.

An Open Letter to F. C. Bellinger

DEAR Freddie: It seems a bit strange to be calling you Freddie when up to yesterday I didn't even know that you lived at 925 Park Avenue in a twelve-room apartment with three servants' rooms and five baths. But you can't begin to realize the thrill I got out of reading all about you in the papers. There I was, riding home on the subway, when all of a sudden I came upon that piece about you. You know the one I mean—get out your clippings, Freddie—the one in the *World-Telegram* under the headline "Runs Elevator, Shotgun at His Side, Then Forms Tenants' Defense League." Well, sir, it was just as though I had been in the March on Rome or the Munich putsch and were seeing history made.

Of course, I was sorry to read in the *Herald Tribune* that only one of your servants' rooms was occupied and that you had to borrow on your soldier's bonus: that is probably the result of confiscatory taxes and the exorbitant demands of the elevator operators. But I was somewhat reassured to learn that you are able to pay \$250 a month rent for your apartment. Some fellow—a red—was saying that \$250 a month is more than twice as much as the best-paid elevator operators earn in the same time, but I didn't pay any attention to him. But the best news of all was that you are the son of Brigadier General John B. Bellinger, assistant paymaster of the army. That really sold me on you. In times like this, Freddie, we must look to the military mind to solve our problems.

Well, I am certainly crazy about your idea for forming the Tenants' Defense League, only—if you don't mind my saying it—I would change the name. It ought to be called something with real punch, like the Bellinger Storm Troopers or the Park Avenue Heimwehr. Only people who make over \$5,000 a year, who live in twelve-room apartments, who hate elevator operators and other foreigners, and who know how to use a gun will be eligible for membership. Of course I don't want to tell you how to run your business, but I think it would be nice if, after you got going, you could add Jew-baiting, Communist-extirmination, and nationalism to your agenda.

I see, according to the latest bulletin from the Park Avenue front, that you say that if the elevator strike is won, New York will be practically sovietized. And you are absolutely right! Why, I know a fellow who works on Fourteenth Street, you know, right down near Union Square, and he was telling me that his boss overheard someone in the subway saying that he knew a fellow who knew a Communist, and this Communist said that the whole strike was being financed by Russia. He said he even saw the check, signed by Stalin. He says what they are trying to do is to get the elevator men's pay raised to twenty-five cents an hour, and then they will make the men kick back half of their raises to help finance the revolution.

Wishing you luck in your wonderful undertaking,

WALK-UP

WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

March 8, 1936

WELL, they're at it again. The nation's economic overlords have launched another desperate offensive to vanquish and kill off a Congressional investigation. This time their target is the Senate's lobby investigation. But the fury of their attack, its careful organization, and the size of the attacking forces encourage belief that the campaign's ultimate objective is to defeat the Black anti-lobby bill and permanently cripple the investigatory powers of Congress. If they attain even their immediate objective, however, it will be only because they first have captured the White House, for Senator Black will keep the lobby investigation going until he is persuaded by Roosevelt that he must surrender or bring defeat to the Administration in November.

If permitted to keep going, he and his colleagues on the investigating committee in a month or so will have demolished the American Liberty League and all the other fake organizations used by big business to cover its grappling-irons with the gauze of patriotic, non-partisan interest. Black will produce evidence indicating that the league is by any reasonable definition a political party, organized in its present form so that the law forbidding corporations to contribute to political parties may be winked at. And he will show that the hand that beats the breast of Jouett Shouse while he intones his litany of the Constitution is the paw of Mellon, Morgan, and Rockefeller as well as of the du Ponts. Indelibly he will impress upon the public that these Samurai have all "lent" thousands to the League; that their loans are repayable immediately after the election in November; and that such loans make a splendid tax-dodging device, since if they are not repaid they may be marked off as "losses," whereas if they had been outright gifts in the first instance, they would have been taxable.

If the fight grows too hot, Black may even destroy one of the haute bourgeoisie's favorite myths by investigating the labor lobby and revealing, perforce, that far from being a lobby able to make Congress jump through its hoop at any time, it is ludicrously moribund and feeble. And yielding to Hearst's clamor that he investigate the peace lobbies—one of their leaders, who supports the Black lobby bill, has already begged him to do so—he may spread out that investigation to include all the "patriotic" societies which maintain lobbies here and sell their services



Roper the Unctuous

to whatever interest has the price.

The campaign against Black's committee began several weeks ago with a series of inspired newspaper stories to the effect that Black and his committee were intent solely upon digging up ammunition for the Administration to use in the election campaign. Meanwhile, the opposition was preparing its batteries to commence firing as soon as the committee resumed hearings on March 2. The first shot, fired on that day, came in the form of an injunction suit instituted here by Andrew Mellon's lawyer, Frank J. Hogan. To help build up the picture that the committee's aim was purely political, a Republican plaintiff had been selected; Hogan acted for the Chicago law firm headed by Silas H. Strawn, vigorous critic of the New

Deal, member of the Republican Finance Committee, and partner of a member of the Liberty League's Lawyers' Committee. Hogan alleged that in subpoenaing copies of all telegrams that passed between Washington and the Strawn firm's Chicago offices in a ten-month period last year, the Black committee was attempting an illegal scrutiny of confidential communications between lawyers and their clients.

As soon as the suit was filed, mimeographed copies of Hogan's petition and a five-page "Note to Washington Correspondents" were distributed to all newspaper offices here. Simultaneously there burst forth in the press a series of denunciations of Black's committee. Quickly the impression was created that the committee's investigators had been examining not only messages dealing with legislation but also billets doux passing between "husband and wife," and sundry other matters with which it had no proper concern. Then came stories that, having no authority to examine the telegraph companies' files, the committee had borrowed the Federal Communications Commission's powers and by that devious route had read five million telegrams.

In dignified editorials the press deplored this desecration of the constitutional guaranty against "unreasonable searches and seizures." It was suggested that the committee, if decent, would have specified exactly what telegrams it wanted. The journalistic torch singers did not explain how that could be done. They suggested, however, that the task of selection be intrusted to the courts. One got the impression that federal judges may scrutinize what may not be seen by members of the Congress. One also got the impression that missives which are perfectly safe in the hands

of telegraph operators, clerks, and messenger boys will be defiled if gazed upon by Senators.

Now here is what actually happened. Black started out by sending questionnaires to interests that campaigned against the holding-company bill. The answers were too innocent. He went after their files—and found them empty. Outfit after outfit had destroyed all records of the campaign. So Black turned to the telegraph companies. He served upon them subpoenas naming certain firms and persons, and calling for all telegrams within the scope of the Senate resolution which were charged to or signed by those firms or persons. The resolution was incorporated in the subpoenas. The companies balked, saying that it would be a tremendously expensive task for them to comply with the subpoena and that, besides, they did not want to take responsibility for construing it in the selection of telegrams. It was then agreed that the committee's agents, subpoena in hand, should make the selection.

Meanwhile, the Communications Commission, interested in the Black committee's disclosure last summer that thousands of forged telegrams had rained upon Congress during the fight over the Wheeler-Rayburn bill, publicly had announced an investigation of its own to see whether the telegraph companies had been violating federal regulations in accepting fictitious messages, soliciting business, permitting addresses to be faked, and slashing rates on messages in bulk. While ten to a dozen of the Black committee's investigators combed the telegraph files, one or two agents of the commission sat in and took notes on messages pertinent to their own investigation. Black's investigators were equipped with a list of known lobbyists. They leafed through the telegraph files, examining only those messages signed by lobbyists or charged to their accounts.

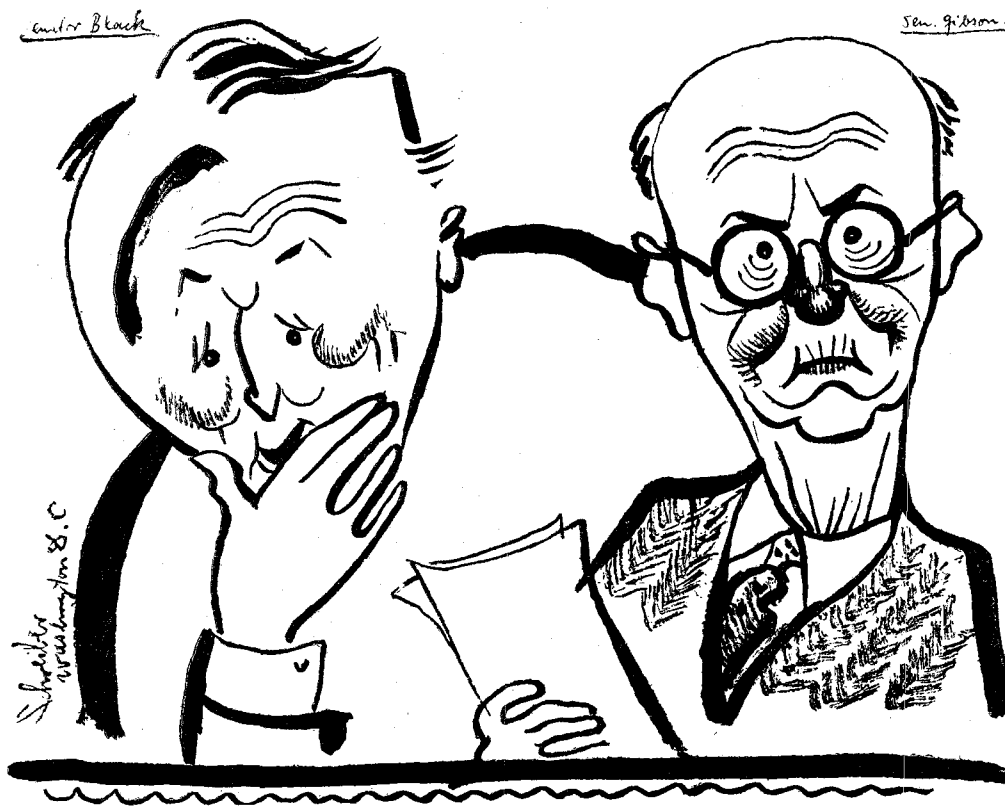
They copied, it is estimated, less than one-half of 1 per cent of the messages so examined.

One witness after another has been compelled to admit on the basis of documentary evidence from the telegraph files that his replies to the committee's questionnaire were false. The testimony thus far taken has also disproved several other accusations and insinuations against the committee, and one of the accusations has been disproved by the conduct of a committee member, Senator Gibson, a Vermont Republican. Looked upon as an old dodo too inept to impede the committee's work, he has surprised all observers by turning out to be one of its most aggressive members. With dryly humorous questions, he strips away the hypocrisies of high-paid lawyer-witnesses and lays bare the actual significance of their testimony so that even a Liberty Leaguer cannot ignore its meaning.

Gibson is quick to deny the charge that the committee is bent solely upon smearing the Administration's foes, and there is no support for the charge in the record. It will show that Roosevelt's friends who are running the International Mercantile Marine are caught in the committee's net; if there is any doubt that they are his friends, it should be dispelled by the knowledge that Roper, the unctuous, has just granted them another reprieve from having to forfeit \$1,000,000 for not fulfilling their part of the Levia-than lay-up contract. The record already shows a large smear representing the testimony pried from agents of Henry L. Doherty, a frequent White House visitor and arranger of the President's birthday balls. Doherty spent at least \$100,000 fighting the Wheeler-Rayburn bill and gave \$25,000 of it to Arthur Mullen, one of Roosevelt's brigade commanders in his war on "intrenched greed."

Finally, there is the insinuation that the committee will

do nothing personally embarrassing to members of Congress and that it will keep its hands off the powerful farm and veterans' lobbies. Yet the committee has just shown that Senator Nye got one of his friends, an ex-Congressman, on the pay roll of one of the power lobbies. In addition, it has shown that George K. Brobeck made use of his prestige as "legislative agent" for the Veterans of Foreign Wars to do \$400 worth of lobbying against the Wheeler-Rayburn bill for the Standard Gas and Electric group. So far he is the only member of the veterans' lobby whom the committee has caught doubling in brass. The lobby business, of course, is a peculiar one and makes friends in all kinds of places. But so far no two-timers have been discovered in the farm and labor lobbies.



Black of Alabama—Gibson of Vermont

Will Farley Reelect LaGuardia?

BY GEORGE BRITT

NEW YORK CITY is overstuffed with Democrats. The official 1935 enrolment showed 1,546,322 of them and only 290,621 Republicans; so that, precisely as in the Solid South, the winner in any election must carry on his side a large slice of the Democratic vote. The elements of this huge local Democracy today are scattered as sheep, having no shepherd. The sight would arouse scorn and unbelief and perhaps an itch to take them in hand in those positive characters who once bossed the territory—Murphy, Croker, and Honest John Kelly. A similar itch is patently agitating James A. Farley, spiritual heir to the old-time Tammany leaders, but his efforts have been far from completely successful.

For this reason it is not fantastic, in spite of the wistful pessimism of the reformers, to fly in the face of a record which says that no reform mayor has ever been elected twice and to declare boldly that Mayor LaGuardia has quite a good chance to be reelected in 1937.

Tammany as a phrase has come to mean the Democratic party machine in New York City. But Tammany as a fact today means the Manhattan organization only, a skeleton of its old self. The treasury in 1934 was so hard up that for the first time in mortal memory Tammany had to ask the state committee for money with which to do its part in the gubernatorial campaign. And this year the chairman of the New York delegation to the Democratic national convention will not be the leader of Tammany Hall; he will probably be the Brooklyn boss, Frank V. Kelly.

In place of the hard-fisted, bearish men who once kept the outlying boroughs in line as vassal dukedoms, Tammany now has upon the throne James J. Dooling, its youngest leader, a college graduate and impeccable citizen, unproved, unfearful, and uneasy. Many of his district leaders are plotting revolt, and in the next borough on either hand is a dangerous rival jealous of Tammany's pretensions and alert for a chance to strip it of power.

While the old bosses were dying off, Tammany's votes were escaping across the bridges, eventually creating the hard issue of "reapportionment," which hinges upon the rivalry between leaders for jobs to give their followers. Manhattan today is the Number One rotten borough of the United States. Stubbornly holding out on its neighbors, Manhattan continues to elect the same number of Assemblymen as Brooklyn, one more state Senator, and several more Representatives in Congress. Yet Brooklyn passed Manhattan in population a dozen years ago. Moreover, the Bronx is almost ready to step ahead, and Queens is pressing hard. These boroughs have a common cause against Tammany in their demands for redistricting.

Both Tammany Hall and the general outlook for har-

mony are weakened also by Farley's federal patronage, which in theory should build up the machine but in practice has created discord. Chairman Farley personally may claim only three of the city's five boroughs. One is the Bronx, over which rules Edward J. Flynn, an original Roosevelt-for-President man, the city's ranking leader, a boss of finesse and ambition. Farley also has made Queens and Richmond his own provinces, having kicked out the old stubborn Tammany-allied war lords there and set up his own leaders, maintaining them with federal support. In Brooklyn the machinery is in the hands of Frank Kelly, a rising power unlikely to yield precedence to Flynn. A delegate to the Chicago convention of 1932 who voted for Al Smith, he seized Brooklyn in defiance of Farley, owes Farley nothing, and has flourished without his help. Dooling himself, though he promised to support President Roosevelt, is no Farley henchman. While the good federal jobs were being distributed, he was kept on a starvation diet. He heard all the storm raised by Al Smith's Liberty League speech and then placed Smith on the official slate as a Tammany delegate to the national convention.

The borough leaders all have different ideas as to New York's next mayor and are perfectly capable of sulking if their own choice is rejected. The most available possibility seems to be Grover Whalen, now in affluent retirement in the liquor business, a resident of Manhattan, a friend of Kelly's, on warm terms with Farley, for years Tammany's best item of window-trimming although not so loyal now. Whalen shakes hands all around. But in time he must commit himself, and he can't choose the whole field.

Such is LaGuardia's opposition. The prestige belongs to Flynn, spokesman for the President himself. The votes are in Kelly's pocket. Tammany is being squeezed between them. The interests of the three are, in practical terms, irreconcilable.

Jim Farley, busy with national problems, has also kept an eye upon the confusion at home and has a solution for it. It is to move in upon Tammany, attaching district leaders to himself one at a time until he can boss the Hall. Then, with Brooklyn brought into a community of interest, Farley would be dictator of the party not only in the nation and state but in the city.

Farley's ambition is said to run not merely to power but to office as well. Does it satisfy him to be Postmaster General? Not at all. He would prefer to be Governor of New York. And since that extraordinary vote-getter, Governor Lehman, is a desirable running mate on the state ticket with President Roosevelt this year, Farley's chance will come in 1938.

So the program takes shape. If the chairman captures the city he may immediately impose a Tammany peace to



Mayor La Guardia - 1934 -

Courtesy of the Downtown Gallery

implement his own career. But suppose Tammany holds out against him. Is he likely to mix at all in the local brawl of 1937, alienating votes he would need a year later? Wouldn't he prefer to let the mayoralty fight settle itself?

The Farley problem is complicated here, as at every other turn, by the Smith problem. New York's chief political phenomenon, the Honorable Alfred E. Smith, is first of all a local issue and after that a national problem. He represents a vast uncertainty, but the most conservative forecaster must be prepared for him to trace still another dividing line through the city Democracy. The Jim Farley Democrats will line up on one side and the Al Smith Democrats on the other. The local candidates that Farley backs, Smith will fight. With all his strength Smith will block Farley from Tammany Hall. And with the wounds of 1936 still fresh, how likely are the Democrats in 1937 to patch up an effective combination against LaGuardia?

At first glance it looks as if the national campaign management, desperately needing New York next fall, would sell LaGuardia out—accept his support and then double-cross him in 1937. But even supposing that Farley should wish to betray him, could he sell him out to Tammany without intrenching the principal opposition on his own road to the governorship? It would be a maneuver of the most delicate strategy, with many chances of mishap.

LaGuardia's main strength last time was the City Fusion Party composed of anti-Tammany Democrats and progressive Republicans, a group symbolized by its emblem of the four-leaf clover. Hundreds of these workers

expected jobs but got none; the leaders found themselves not consulted, not even received with politeness. "I will not," said LaGuardia amid their victory jubilations, "turn out one set of politicians just for the sake of putting in another set." The regular Republican machine workers who supported him have been left to starve, without enough patronage to support their clubhouses. Certainly they will not want him for mayor again. But LaGuardia will be able to carry the Republican primary because of the lack of any comparable opponent.

The friends of good government in all parties should support LaGuardia because he has realized so many of their dreams for them. On the whole he has given New York a much better return for its tax money than it has had in a long time, a higher standard of official conduct, a more intelligent conception of what the city government can do. His commissioners actually are administrators of departments, chosen and directed to get work done, not district leaders supported for party activity. LaGuardia has reestablished the city's broken credit. His law department has saved millions of dollars by defeating all sorts of phony claims. An open-air campaign rally for LaGuardia in some new city park, on the clean grass, beside the children's swings and slides installed by his Park Commissioner, Robert Moses, would be a matchless object lesson and the despair of hecklers. The Mayor unquestionably has the knack, difficult and special, of making the rusty wheels of the city government turn around.

But that, of course, has little or nothing to do with chances for reelection. LaGuardia's votes must be expected principally from the large extra-political, class-conscious groups with which he has conducted an unwavering courtship, notably labor, the Jews, and the Italians. By this time hundreds of thousands of these should be in a mood to turn out loyally for him whenever he rings the alarm bell. In this wooing at times he has unblushingly played the demagogue. It would be hard otherwise to explain his refusal to license an alien German masseur upon the pretext that the government in Germany was persecuting the Jews. He also lent his presence to the Italian Red Cross mass-meeting at which other speakers furiously praised Mussolini. Such incidents may depress his followers, but as bids for a mass vote they cannot be discounted. LaGuardia also may count upon a heavy labor vote. The last reform Mayor, John Purroy Mitchel, was accused of being "too much Fifth Avenue." LaGuardia is not. The president of the Central Trades and Labor Council admits publicly that "labor has got a better break since LaGuardia has taken office than ever before."

The Mayor may benefit also from two promising potential scandals which indicate political connections—the Drukman murder case in Brooklyn, which is being investigated by Special Prosecutor Hiram C. Todd, and the racket inquiry of Special Prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey. Each of these, fully developed and with luck in the timing, might arouse a brief flare-up of the indignant-citizen vote.

Still another possibility is the issue shot from under the Mayor by the courts last year but still susceptible to resurrection, his proposal for a municipally owned power plant. Under the initial threat of it he won a reduction of some

\$2,000,000 a year in the city's own electric-light bill. If another swing of this club should scare out a rate cut for the small householder, that would be indeed heaven's blessing, in every way as good as Tammany's overworked device of saving the five-cent fare.

At the next election, furthermore, the police will be under LaGuardia's own command. No political machine is going to use against him the force which Tammany has often relied on in the past for an additional 50,000 or 100,000 votes.

LaGuardia personally is the most important item aiding his chances to win. New York City never had a mayor like him. To honesty and an encyclopedic grasp of public business he adds the dramatics of a born campaigner, a long-range view of political strategy, and a touch of the audacity and madness which often before have spelled luck for him. He has defects, which are exasperating, but also the strength of his defects. Years ago as president of the Board of Aldermen he lived in the vortex of a perpetual squabble, and the late Comptroller Charles L. Craig once implored Mayor Hylan in open meeting to "hit him over the head with your gavel." The same sentiment has been breathed since by hundreds of colleagues and associates. He can be petty under criticism, overbearing, unfair, stubborn toward his enemies and often more stubborn toward his friends.

He has appeared at his raucous and irritable worst toward protestants over relief. He has bullied them when they persisted, and he put an entirely unconvincing face upon the recent police interference with the relief parade,

when Representative Marcantonio was placed in "protective custody." For months he has kept alive a juvenile warfare with Room 9, the City Hall press room, as if taking pains to insure a worse record of his administration in the newspapers than any hostile editor would dictate.

But the heat generated by this erupting volcano radiates personal magnetism. If he is dogged enough to hang on to an indefensible position, he is equally keen to attack an impregnable opponent. He gives visitors a lift of the spirit. He has charm and knows how to turn it on. When he starts after votes again—no doubt of it—he will be able to call back into the ranks and put diligently to work many a disgruntled veteran who swore never again to lift a finger in his behalf. From 1916 on, failing only once to be a candidate, he was never defeated for Congress until 1932, although he was almost always rated a sure loser at the start and was only twice in that time *persona grata* to the political respectables and the organization of a major party. The untimely deaths of two colleagues now have demoted him to a minority position on the Board of Estimate, but it is as a minority fighter that he always has been most effective.

The great weakness of his opponents appears to be the want of united dynamic leadership, exactly that element which LaGuardia contributes most inspiringly to his side of a fight. His prospect of reelection may be slight, but as the beneficiary of the Democratic feuds and selfish rivalries of Jim Farley and Tammany Hall, better government in New York has at least as rosy a chance today as it seemed to have just before LaGuardia was first elected. Its friends are blind if they don't fight for it.

Poland: Between Poverty and War

BY LOUIS FISCHER

Warsaw, February 15

ENGLAND and Poland can determine whether or not there will be another European war—England by its strength and prestige, Poland by its geographical location. If England and Poland declared in advance that they would march against an aggressor, the likelihood of war would be considerably diminished. Germany would never attack the U. S. S. R. if it knew positively that England, France, Poland, and Czecho-Slovakia would unite against it. Under the same circumstances, it would keep out of Austria. London, however, consistently refuses to participate in an Eastern Locarno. There are many who believe that a clear declaration of purpose by Sir Edward Grey in the summer of 1914 would have prevented war. There are many who believe that England's responsibility is equally great in the crisis now developing.

Poland's role in European peace is also an important one. The difference is that whereas all England knows it has nothing to gain from another war, many Poles are not

so sure. Poland, in my opinion, is playing a doubtful diplomatic game based on the idea that since war is inevitable it might as well get something out of it.

In Europe at present it is difficult to know where any government will stand tomorrow. But it is relatively simple to ascertain what are its objectives today. Poland's foreign policy, however, is the most unintelligible in Europe. During the past week here I have talked at length with Foreign Minister Beck; Finance Minister Kwiatkowski, the economic dictator of the country; General Burhart-Bukachi, of the Inspector General's office; Colonel Ignace Matushevski, editor of the *Gazetta Polska*, a government organ; and various Foreign Office officials, foreign diplomats, foreign and Polish journalists, business men, and "men on the street." I cannot write what they told me. What I write is my reaction to what they said.

The Poles are convinced that sooner or later Germany will go to war. They believe that in the beginning they can stay out and sell their neutrality dearly. Their present

"unprejudiced" attitude, moreover, would subsequently make it possible for them to side with the strongest battalions. In any event, the war is not yet here. So why choose between one combination and another? Better let both camps court and pay. This is or was the Polish foreign policy. But a weak country experiences difficulties in following such a course.

The present phase opened in 1933 when Hitler offered to respect the Polish Corridor for ten years. It would have been insane to reject this welcome proposal. Poland thought it could accept and still retain the old friendship with its allies, France and Rumania. But there was much resentment in Poland against France, part of it justified. France had often offended Poland's exaggerated *amour propre*. Pilsudski and Beck had never been warm lovers of France. Warsaw's new and improved connections with Germany gave Poland an eagerly desired opportunity of showing Paris a more independent front. Poles talked volubly about being a "great power."

Fence-sitting, however, requires skill, and after a while Poland lost its balance and fell over into the German camp. The press of each country no longer knew anything bad about the other, and wrongs to minorities were squeezed into small type. German statesmen made visits, some of them unsolicited, to Warsaw and to Polish hunting grounds—on one such occasion, incidentally, Göring tried to sound Pilsudski on the question of an anti-Soviet war, but the wily Marshal refused to be drawn out. Poland began to echo Germany's objection to the eastern pact and collective security, preferring, like Hitler, bilateral treaties which are ineffective because they carry no element of compulsion. Polish delegates at Geneva appeared to be speaking on behalf of the Wilhelmstrasse; or was it that they had so identified themselves with Nazi foreign policy that no difference could be discerned between the two? Amicable Polish-German relations next drew Poland closer to revisionist Hungary. Inevitably Poland's relations with France, Rumania, and Russia grew worse. Moreover, the corollary of the German-Polish honeymoon seemed to be a superfluous quarrel with Czecho-Slovakia about the treatment of Polish minorities in the rich border province of Teschen, where the munitions industry flourishes.

The Polish attitude to Germany consists of equal parts of fear and respect. Poles take it for granted that these sentiments are shared by other powers. They believe, consequently, that if Germany goes to war, enough nations will remain aloof to enable Germany to win. Poland's benevolent neutrality might then be handsomely rewarded. Poland would undoubtedly prefer German expansion in the direction of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. The Poles would presumably receive Teschen and the Hungarians Slovakia; thus a common Polish-Hungarian frontier would be created, which appeals to some minds.

For selfish considerations Poland could hardly welcome a German attack on the U. S. S. R. The German army would reach Soviet territory either through Poland, a development Poland would not relish yet might not be strong enough to prevent, or through Lithuania and Latvia, with Finland perhaps cooperating in the North, in

which case half of Poland would be uncomfortably surrounded by Germans. Germany today respects the Corridor. A victorious and aggrandized Germany might decide to eliminate it. This may be the logic of Polish disinclination to see an anti-Soviet military move. But in actual fact Polish friendship with Germany enhances its likelihood. Were Japan and Germany ready to invade Russia, the Poles, even if they did not see the apparent advantage of joining the anti-Bolshevik front, could be compelled to do so. The Poles know too well the nature of Germany's and Japan's designs. The Japanese use Warsaw as a coordinating point for much of their military intelligence and diplomatic activity in Europe. Poland's foreign policy is dangerous because it encourages the enemies of the status quo and threatens to draw the country into a conflict which can bring only harm.

Powerful elements in Poland are fortunately beginning to see this simple truth. One learns that General Ridz-Smigly favors a more pro-French orientation. Ridz-Smigly is the real head of the Polish army, the biggest factor in Polish politics. In a very direct sense he is Pilsudski's successor and political heir. Since the great marshal's death he has kept out of the limelight and devoted his time to solidifying his influence with the armed forces. Now there are signs that he proposes to counteract the excessively pro-German line of Poland's policy. The army has a French tradition. General Sossenkovsky, second only to Ridz-Smigly, is known to be Francophile. But if the Polish army's pro-French leanings will merely offset without eradicating the pro-German sympathies of other powerful elements, uncertainty will rule in Warsaw, and suspicion and grave concern abroad. Moreover, it is not enough to be pro-French. If the army's aim is to replace the Soviet Union in the French security system, the total will be a minus quantity. There ought to be room in the councils of peace for France, Russia, and Poland. These countries, with the Baltic states, Czecho-Slovakia, and Rumania, and with Germany should it decide to adhere, can guarantee peace in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, most authorities in Warsaw would like to think of the eastern mutual-assistance pact as dead. (If it is, many hopes for Europe's tranquillity die with it.) England's collaboration, however, could reconcile them to the pact. British prestige is very high in those parts of Europe.

The trouble with Polish foreign policy is its refusal to be guided by principle. It rejects the long view and attacks each objective as it presents itself. Some years ago a foreign diplomat, in the presence of Joseph Beck, asked Marshal Pilsudski why, since he possessed absolute power, he did not introduce the constitutional reforms at one stroke. Pilsudski answered in the words of Goethe: "In der Selbstbeschränkung zeigt sich der Meister." ("Genius reveals itself through self-limitation.") This rule may work very well when one controls all the factors, but in diplomacy it breeds the worst kind of opportunism. Poland must decide whether it stands with the violent revisionists or with those who want collective security.

How any sane Pole can contemplate the outbreak of war baffles the intelligence. Poland least of any country can afford a war. Its people are poverty-stricken. Arma-

ment expenditures are breaking its back. Neutral or not, Poland might easily be the battlefield of a European war, and be ruined. No one denies Poland's terrible material plight. Joseph Poniatovsky, an accepted authority, estimates that of a total population of 33,400,000, some 9,000,000 in the villages alone are "surplus." One hears this repeated on all sides in Warsaw. A country which has many sparsely settled agricultural areas is rated "overpopulated" because of its low living standards. The restriction of emigration to America and elsewhere has been a serious blow for the Polish economy.

Poland counts 540,000 employed workers and 330,000 unemployed. The nominal wages of the employed are 45 per cent lower than in 1928-29; their living standard is 35 per cent lower. The 330,000 government employees and 300,000 private-office employees are living at a level 10 to 15 per cent above the 1928-29 level. The armed forces, according to government figures, number 271,510. All this in itself reflects a rotten state of affairs.

About 63 per cent of Poland's population is rural. In the Sejm, on December 5, 1935, Minister Kviatkovsky said: "Poland has 3,300,000 farms. Of these, 34 per cent are smaller than dwarf households, and an additional 31 per cent are small households of two to five hectares. In the southern provinces the number of dwarf households exceeds 54 per cent. In this great stratum of population are 10,000,000 persons who stand completely outside the realm of economic life and activity." They neither buy nor sell. One can imagine the lot of these 10,000,000 Polish citizens when one learns that, as Kviatkovsky went on to say, the peasants who have ten hectares of land—millionaires compared to the dwarfs—spend on the average 40 gold zloty or \$8 per year per person. This means eleven groshen or about two gold cents a day. In 1929, Kviatkovsky declared, they spent \$22.40 a year. Such a nation is not a great power. Poland imports less per capita than any other European country except Albania. Poland has weak industries, and although the metallurgical, chemical, and electrical industry has expanded in the last decade, the

army is poorly mechanized, the roads are bad, and real military strength is therefore limited.

Of late the peasants have been reacting violently against their poverty. In May, 1935, a serious insurrection in the Volhynia district lasted several months and had to be suppressed with armed force. A similar event occurred in central Poland in December, 1935. Bloody revolts grow more and more common. The oppositionist National Democrats sometimes inspire them and often try to lead them. Usually they are accompanied by pogroms against Jews. Anti-Semitism has spread since 1933. Bombs are thrown into synagogues, Jewish houses burned, and Jews beaten and killed. The government either cannot or will not stop these excesses.

The only real solution of the peasant problem is land reform. Radicals sometimes believe that the redistribution of land to benefit the peasantry requires only a will to undertake it on the part of the government or the ruling class. This is not true in Poland. Many owners would be glad to get rid of their estates in exchange for some money. If the state expropriated them, the national economy would be ruined, for most landlords are heavily in debt. Moreover, there is no point in giving land alone to the peasantry. Money is also needed for animals, equipment, and seed. The government does not possess such funds. For a time the Polish authorities implemented a mild land reform and divided approximately 2,200,000 hectares among land-hungry peasants—half of it the former property of Germans. But financial stringency has interrupted even this insufficient measure.

Mr. Kviatkovsky, the Minister of Finance, is an enlightened liberal economist—originally a physicist—and he is striving valiantly to cope with a most distressing situation. His panacea is deflation, which brings him enemies. His hope is a foreign loan and bigger foreign markets; neither prospect is bright.

With all these economic, social, and political problems to solve, Poland ought to be the most pacifist nation of Europe. It is not.



Polka, 1936

Federal Relief—Sold Down the River

BY EDITH ABBOTT

THE collapse of the FERA has brought great suffering over wide areas of the country, not only for the unfortunate, mislabeled "unemployables"—the old, the sick, the handicapped, the widowed mothers with dependent children—but for large numbers of the able-bodied unemployed, as clearly "employable" as any men and women can ever be. These are the unemployed who came on the relief rolls after the arbitrary dead line of November 1, 1935, set up by the Federal Works Progress Administrator as the date after which no more "employables" would be accepted for the new WPA program. Among the employables who are still on relief are also large numbers of able-bodied women, for whom street work and the other WPA jobs have not been exactly suitable. There are also the employables in areas where WPA projects could not be set up to provide for the numbers available for the new made work. These later groups of the unemployed, as well as the so-called unemployables, have been turned back to the bankrupt treasuries of the local taxpayers and to the well-meaning but incapable overseers of the poor, county commissioners, poor boards, and county supervisors, whose announced object is to save money for the taxpayers who elected them and will in due course be called upon to reelect them.

The old challenging messages to the country which once issued from the press conferences of the Federal Relief Administrator, whose office has now been abolished with the FERA—the statements that "hunger is not debatable," and "no one shall starve"—are no longer repeated to an appreciative group of newspaper men and women. There is an ominous silence in Washington about the misery that is reported from one section after another. Even the liberal Senators who were early supporters of federal relief seem to take no notice of the destitute men, women, and children who have been left not only hungry but without fuel, and with eviction notices almost as terrifying as they were in the days before Mr. Hopkins began to set things right. "This business of relief" has ended as far as the federal government is concerned, and hunger is once more abroad in the land as it was in those three winters of bitter memory from 1930 to 1933.

For months the FERA struggled along, like Eliza crossing the ice. One major crisis after another was faced or dodged by the various state emergency relief administrations; one hope after another rose and then died away. But Eliza, clinging to the ice floes, was unable to escape and finally was sold down the river.

A year ago, when the President announced that he intended to "end this business of relief," no one knew exactly what he had in mind. There were many states, notably those south of Mason and Dixon's line, where

the federal government had been providing from 95 to 98 per cent of all the relief given; and certainly this meant that the federal government had been giving help to the "unemployables" as well as to the able-bodied unemployed. According to the statistics recently placed in the *Congressional Record* by a Republican Senator, whose figures are probably right even if his politics are wrong, there were only twelve states in which the federal government had been carrying less than 70 per cent of the relief burden. Did Washington think that it was possible for the local relief authorities to take back any such burden as this? Do the liberal Senators know what is happening in their own states? Mayor LaGuardia's relief commission showed last year how inadequate relief had been even with federal help and even in the wealthy city of New York. What did the President's relief advisers think relief would be like without federal help—and in the really destitute and bankrupt areas?

The bitter truth has gradually dawned upon social workers that we are doomed to drift back to the old days of pauper relief, that we must turn the unemployables and many of the country's unemployed back to the tender mercies of the petty local officials, who give inadequate doles to the "worthy poor" and do not worry about what happens to the "unworthy"; who order the non-residents out of town or, like California, stop them at the border. Transients, many of whom are really unemployed seasonal laborers, are once more sleeping in the police stations and being told to "move on" and "get out of town."

The new social-security program will, in states where an acceptable plan has been worked out in conformity with the federal law, ultimately bring some help to the old people and the dependent children. But the wheels of this great machine have been turning very slowly for many a long and weary month, and in the meantime heart-breaking tragedies are reported in one state after another. Just why the federal "business of relief" was ended before this major part of the new program was ready to function has never been explained. Just why the great investment in the Federal Emergency Relief Administration was destroyed before any permanent, modern public-welfare substitute could be put in its place can never be understood. The one thing that is clear is that intense suffering has followed in the wake of the latest experiment at Washington, and that prolonged misery will accompany the revival of the old, discredited system of pauper relief.

The end of the FERA has been one of the tragedies of the Administration program. Our most promising experiment in public welfare has been destroyed in the house of its friends.

The Decline of French Fascism

BY M. E. RAVAGE

Paris, February 28

EVENTS move rapidly in France these days. I had been away a bare six months, and during my absence I had kept in touch—or thought I had—through newspapers and correspondence, with developments here. Yet it needed but a few days for me to realize how different was the France I found from the one I had quit late in August. In a country where revolution and counter-revolution are at mortal grips, one must, it seems, be on the spot, in hourly contact with men and movements, if one is not to drop hopelessly out of line.

The day of my departure the counter-revolution was apparently master of the situation, the bulk of the nation apparently cowed. I say apparently because beneath the surface the tide was even then turning toward the left. The fascist grip had, indeed, begun to slip as long ago as November, 1934, when Doumergue, deflated and outmaneuvered, had gone back to his country seat in Tournefeuille, and the reactionary scheme of casting him for the role of Hindenburg had revealed itself as an idle dream. Yet outwardly the rise of Laval to power, after the Flandin interlude, looked dangerously like a reinforcement of the right. Laval was younger, subtler, more agile, and less scrupulous than the former President of the republic, and he was closer both to the financial-industrial oligarchy and to their militant tools, the De la Rocques, Taittingers, and other civil-war mongers. A complaisant Chamber abdicated its mandate over the purse, granting Laval at the banks' behest the deflationary decree-laws it had refused Flandin. He carried on for a time like a sort of dictator *pro tem*. He openly favored the fascists and their chiefs. When on July 14 the democratic parties marched to the Bastille to reaffirm their faith in the republic, he invited De la Rocque to lead his Croix de Feu in a counter-demonstration up the Champs-Élysées to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Flandin, too, had deemed it a gesture of reconciliation for the head of the republican government to attend the service at Notre Dame commemorating the heroes who on February 6 of the year before had fallen in a patriotic attempt to overthrow the republic. But whereas Flandin, who had acted from weakness, had been properly rewarded for his trouble by the fascists' spitting upon him in the cathedral, his successor, knowing exactly what he was doing and why, was hailed by the entire right for his broad hint that law and order—meaning the effective dictatorship of two hundred huge fortunes—were not defenseless.

Thus encouraged, De la Rocque was conducting himself one day like the heir-apparent of the seemingly dying republic and the next like *Reichsführer* Hitler. He bullied the Premier as a mere regent who was keeping the throne warm for his legitimate successor. Failing compli-

ance by the republican authorities, he mobilized his *dispos* (shock troops) and shot up a Paris suburb, a northern industrial town, or the city of Limoges. The Croix de Feu was growing in numbers and arrogance, clashes with workers and left partisans became regular occurrences, public men were assaulted nearly every day, civil war was in the air. Superficial observers with a taste for analogy declared the republic doomed and fascism inevitable.

Laval knew better. He did his utmost, being himself one of the richest men in France, to prime the upstart for his role of national strike-breaker à la Hitler, as the two hundred wealthy families desired. But he early perceived that De la Rocque—army officer, nobleman, clerical, coxcomb—was not of the stuff of which popular dictators are made. He lacked the folk touch. He did not speak the language of the little man of France—the shopkeeper, the civil servant, the peasant, the artisan, the workers of the outlying *faubourgs* and the red-belt suburbs. Moreover, by his strutting and his airs he antagonized the rival fascist groups with their own embryonic Mussolinis.

Laval saw through the rootlessness of the Croix de Feu and the hollowness of its "revered leader." But he used the fascist bluff for his own ends. The abortive putsch of February 6, 1934, had consolidated the demoralized left majority in parliament and in the country into a united front, which, as time went on, recovered its morale and its force. Laval waved the fascist menace before the Front Populaire to keep it in check and himself and his friends in power. Labor, the Socialists, the Communists, the Daladier Radicals, and the small business men organized mass demonstrations to protest against the ruinous deflationary measures. The government, far from heeding the demand for the dissolution of the fascist associations, connived at their arming, at their infiltration into the air service, and encouraged them to stage riotous, often bloody counter-demonstrations. It quietly directed the capital police and the national *gardes mobiles* to hound the left while leaving the extreme-right factions in full command of the street. The *grande presse* needed no orders to do its part; it had gone fascist in February, 1934.

Laval used the fascist bluff, too, in his relations with Italy, Germany, the U. S. S. R., England, and the League. The recovering parliamentary forces in Parliament and outside pressed him hard on the left. He reluctantly went to Moscow to conclude the negotiations initiated there by Herriot and carried forward by Barthou. He was obliged to take Paul-Boncour to Geneva, vote Italy the aggressor, and verbally assent to sanctions. But he looked with a friendly eye upon the right opposition to the ratification of the Soviet pact. He hoped to escape swallowing the bitter Russian medicine by pretending to carry on conversations with Hitler.

Such was the French scene in August and the months that followed. True, the left forces, aroused by the common danger and pressed by the rank and file, had mobilized ninety-odd groups—running all the way from the Radical Socialists to the Communists and from the powerful trade unions to the tenants' association and the committee of anti-fascist intellectuals—into a single bloc. This heterogeneous union had come together on a negative issue and it continued on the defensive. Its very range—and diversity—promised ill for its permanence; there were too many interests, traditions, prejudices to conciliate. For six months a program commission deliberated and dickered before it could agree on a platform acceptable to them all. Nor was the enemy idle. The right, after driving the Radical Socialists into the arms of the Marxists, now sought, by fair means and foul, to wean them away again in the hope of disrupting the coalition. There were times, notably after the riots attending the strikes in Toulon and other naval ports last summer, when it seemed as if they might succeed.

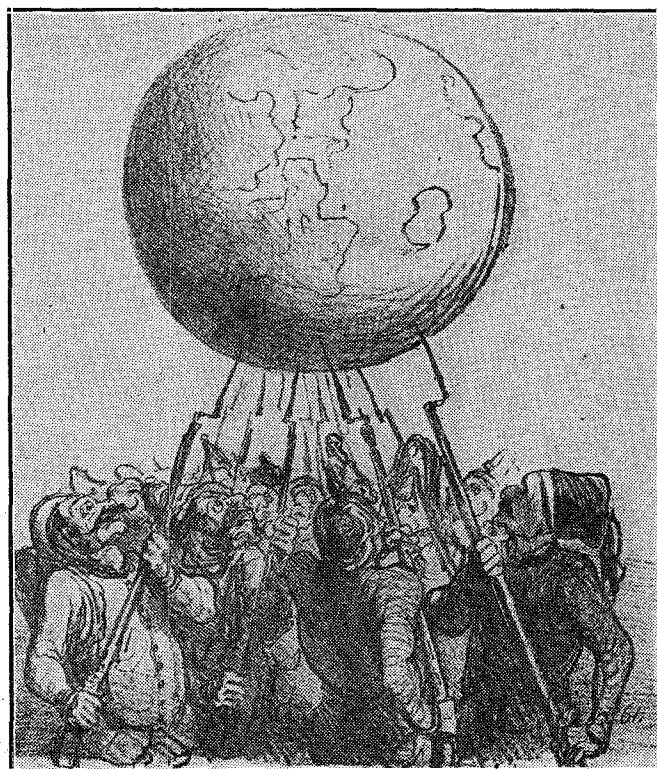
Now, six months later, the atmosphere is completely changed. It is not so much that Laval is gone and that a new Cabinet predominantly left governs in his place. The Sarraut Ministry is itself a symbol of the distance French politics have covered in my short absence. A foreigner who knew nothing of the "historic February 6" would scarcely guess that a fascist putsch had ever occurred, and that for two years this country had been ruled by a pre-dictatorship. The Front Populaire now holds the key to the situation. It is the fascist leaguers who are on the defensive and avoid encounters with their foes and cede the sidewalk to them. One had an overwhelming instance of this phenomenon on February 16 during the impressive five-hour parade in protest against the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Blum. The Croix de Feu? Not a sound from it. The Colonel has, in the French vernacular phrase, disappeared from the traffic.

In addition to the fact that, among a people with the history and character of the French, fascist dictatorship could never have more than a feeble chance, several concrete developments had occurred during my absence which could not but alter the face of things. I list them as they came. The Stavisky trial, which after being held up for two years finally reached the courts late last fall, demonstrated to the most benighted Frenchman that the whole scandal had been deliberately timed and sprung by the opposition to discredit the left majority and to nullify the will of the electorate. By mid-January the program committee at last published its platform. If this mildly socialistic document disappointed the extreme now-or-never, all-or-nothing revolutionaries, they comforted themselves with the thought that a cleaner sweep could not have received the unanimous vote of all the groups, and that insistence could only have resulted in disrupting the bloc. The more moderate elements, for their part, found matter for congratulation in the fact that while the Bank of France and the key industries were to be nationalized, private property was to be left untouched, and also in the fact that the Marxists did

not bolt. Not least, Mussolini contributed his share. The Ethiopian adventure served to break the spell of dictatorship by concretely demonstrating what no amount of agitation could quite prove—that fascism means war. The French, who have everything to lose and nothing to gain by upsetting the international status quo, are resolutely for peace.

The elimination of Laval, as I have said, is symbolic of the recovered strength of the left. In point of fact the Front Populaire could have got rid of him three months earlier if it had chosen to. It preferred to avoid a ministerial crisis before the elections. Two things finally drove it to act. The Communists, and some others as well, seeing that Laval meant to shelve the Franco-Soviet pact, pressed for his downfall. More important still, all the participating group and parties feared that with Laval in office it might not be possible to have fair elections. For though the ex-Premier had bowed sufficiently to left pressure to get a bill to the Chamber for the dissolution of the fascist league, he was in no hurry to execute it. The new government, despite the presence of Flandin, Mandel, and Maurin, depends for its existence on the Socialists, who have voted for it, and on the Communists, who have at least not voted against it. It needed but the encouragement so conveniently offered it by the royalists in their incredibly mad attempt on Blum's life to proceed to the suppression of the civil-war mongers and to turn the country back to the parties whom the voters in 1932 had put in control.

Is the fascist danger quite eliminated in France? It is dangerous to prophesy. Other leaders with other tactics may well arise. But the chances of a successful counter-revolutionary dictatorship are unquestionably slimmer than before.



Drawing by Daumier

From *Actualités*, 1866*European Equilibrium*

The Consumer Front

BY RUTH BRINDZE

ONCE again there is a move to pull the teeth of the Federal Trade Commission. This time the offending molar is publicity. Business in general and particularly the advertising moguls object to the FTC including in its news releases information about formal complaints issued by the commission. Such publicity is unfair, they say, because the product or the organization is condemned by the public before the hearing and the adjudication of the case. On its face there appears to be some merit to this argument, but on closer inspection the fallacies become apparent. First of all, the publicity given the news from the FTC is decidedly meager since few publications find it fit to print. Furthermore, before the complaint is issued, the commission advises the party against whom it intends to proceed of the charges and accepts evidence in defense of the alleged violations. As a result (1) the case may be dismissed; (2) the respondents may sign a stipulation to cease and desist; or (3) a formal complaint may be issued which gives the defendant an opportunity to contest the action, first before the commission, and then on appeal to the courts.

Until February, 1934, when a new policy went into effect, the FTC omitted the names of companies which signed stipulations from the official publicity releases as an inducement for a settlement without litigation. From the public's point of view, full publicity for every case is desirable. The trouble is that even today nothing approaching full publicity is achieved. However, no one should be a better judge of the effectiveness of publicity than the advertising men. Their cries for "justice" indicate that even the little news that finds its way into the American press is embarrassing to big business.

Hearings on the Wheeler-Rayburn bill to amend the Federal Trade Commission Act are now being held by the Senate committee. This bill, *Printer's Ink* warns, "changes the Trade Commission Act from an instrument to protect competition to one that also protects consumers," and it also goes on record as believing that "there are other and better ways . . . of accomplishing a real degree of consumer protection." At a time when stop-gaps are the order of the day, the consumer will welcome a strengthening of the commission. This the Wheeler-Rayburn bill attempts by incorporating the FTC's suggestion (see *The Nation* of January 29) that it be given jurisdiction over "unfair or deceptive acts and practices in commerce," a change which would have brought victory instead of defeat in the famous Marmola case. The bill also increases the commission's power to enforce its orders by authorizing it to apply for an injunction when it has reason to believe that the defendant "intends to or is about to disobey" the commission's ruling, and by providing an initial penalty of \$500 and an additional fine of \$25 per day for failure

to comply with the commission's orders. The ridiculously small penalties heretofore attached to disobedience of FTC rulings have long needed correction.

ANOTHER sour note on milk prices has been interjected by the Commissioner of Markets of New York City. In a speech to clubwomen Commissioner Morgan observed that the price of milk was too high and that Mayor LaGuardia intended to break the hold of the "trust" by the establishment of a city-owned pasteurization plant. Plans are, of course, indefinite, and it is not unlikely that the Mayor's spokesman was merely issuing a threat. However, the Commissioner's statement is significant in the light of a report on the milk trust submitted to the Mayor a few months ago by the Marketing Department, in which the need of a change in our present method of milk distribution was emphasized and suggestions were made for public or cooperative distribution.

It is probably too much to ask that city and state officials agree even on such matters as the efficiency and economy of our present system of milk distribution. Still it is ludicrous for the city to be advocating public ownership while the state stands sponsor for an advertisement in New York City newspapers, entitled "A Bargain at Your Door!" which points out that "through producer, transportation, bottling, all the way to delivery of the milk at your door, costs are held down by a system that is without parallel for efficiency. The marvel is that milk can cost so little, that you can buy it so cheap." Certainly, this advertisement, paid for by state funds, does not jibe with the findings of the New York City Marketing Department or with those of the FTC's investigators of the milk trust.

THE fight for the grading of canned goods is narrowing down to a private war between the National Canners' Association, representing nationally advertised brands, and the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, 60 per cent of whose canned-goods sales are of their private brands. A year ago, when the code makers were still busy in Washington, A and P broke the solid ranks of the canners by agreeing to grade and label its private-brand canned goods according to United States standards. The code administrator and the consumer agencies in Washington hailed this as a great victory, since the grading of canned goods has long been regarded as a test of the entire movement for honestly labeled consumer goods. The skeptics waited for something more tangible. This A and P has now supplied with fourteen items of food clearly labeled with the government grades, a move which is paying them well in good-will and advertising.

[Miss Brindze's page appears in *The Nation* every other week.]

Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

OUR extraordinary lurch into enormous armament expenses goes on apace, and every day brings additional proposals for military or naval increases. Now comes the news of a proposed five-year program calling for 4,000 army planes at a cost of \$70,000,000. A bill to this effect has been offered by Chairman McSwain of the House Military Affairs Committee. Mr. McSwain's contention is that though the Morrow board fixed the ratio between the navy and army forces at ten to eighteen, the naval aircraft authorized or built total 2,190, while the army authorization still remains at 1,800, when it should be 4,000. The new Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, has made the usual appeal for increased armaments; in a speech over the radio he declares that he is not in favor of an overwhelming force but only of an army of reasonable size with effective reserves.

The amount of money appropriated continues to stagger the public. The War Department's military expenditures have increased from \$108,382,063 in 1913 to approximately \$375,000,000—the total of the strictly military expenditures in the pending record-breaking army bill of \$543,000,000. The navy bill, if it stays at the limit fixed in the new budget, will bring the total for army and navy to approximately \$950,000,000, to which will be added sums set aside by the WPA and PWA not yet expended which may carry the total as high as \$1,200,000,000, or much more than the entire cost of the United States government in 1916. The President is also asking in an especial bill that the naval reserves be increased by no less than 110,000 men; thus we shall have an additional fixed charge for the maintenance of these reserves as soon as they are established. Last year the Congress authorized the construction of six new air bases to cost \$12,000,000, but that money has not yet been appropriated. The navy has just asked for an additional 221,000 tons of auxiliary ships merely to carry ammunition and supplies, and so it goes. When is it to end?

It is obvious from this that we are engaged in an armament race with the rest of the world. Russia has taken the lead with the largest standing army in the world, 1,300,000 men, costing, with the Russian navy, the huge sum of \$7,000,000,000 a year. To this is added the announcement that they are going to build their navy up to rival the Japanese.

No one knows what the Germans are spending on armaments or how rapidly their plans are going forward, although even conservative observers calculate that by 1939 they will be "ready." Ready, that is, to plunge the world into another period of slaughter. Stanley Baldwin gives as one of the reasons for the great new British arms

program the fact that certain ships now building for the German navy will be completed in two years instead of five. Hoover, when he was President, bewailed the fact that the world was spending \$5,000,000,000 a year for armaments while many countries were on the verge of bankruptcy. I do not know whether he included the Russian figures in this estimate or not, but if he did, the world's army and navy expenditures have gone up at least seven or eight billions a year more because of the German rearmament, our own great increase in expenditures, and the enormous Russian outlay. It would not be surprising if the world were spending today twelve or thirteen billions a year for increasing armaments. Yet Calvin Coolidge spoke the truth when he said that no amount of armament ever kept a country out of war or insured it victory when it got into war.

It is plain that we are rapidly reaching the ideal of all militarists, when the world will be entirely in arms. But will the world be a better and safer place with all the nations armed to the teeth? Wouldn't they be just as well off relatively if none of them armed at all? If it is true, as so many people insist, that armaments lead to war, of course these great equipments and huge armies will sooner or later lead to a terrific explosion. Stanley Baldwin declared only three years ago that if a new armament race began, a number of nations would be bankrupted. Somehow it seems to me perfectly idiotic that human beings should continue to place their faith in weapons and armed men instead of trying to find some other way of settling their international disputes.

So far as we are concerned, it would not be out of place for the American public to ask its government, first, against whom we are arming; secondly, whether we are getting a dollar's worth of defense for every dollar invested, since high army and navy officers declare that this is not the case; thirdly, whether we have a defense program which is meant for defense and not for offense; whether there is any coordination whatsoever between army and navy—which army and navy officers also deny; whether if we are truly on the defensive and have no idea of aggression, as the President has repeatedly said, the last time at the grave of the Unknown Soldier on last Armistice Day, we need 35,000-ton battleships, and so on. One of the highest officers in the navy assured me only a week or ten days ago that it would be impossible for the American and Japanese fleets to wage war against each other. If this is true, ought we not to make a great change in our whole policy? As it is, it is contended that we are ladling out money with little or no reference to any sound policy, just as the President has been pouring out money for public works without a far-reaching program.

BROUN'S PAGE

WHEN and if Frank Knox becomes the President of the United States it is not likely that relief allowances will be particularly generous, for the Chicago editor is rigorous in his ideas of thrift. "The Story of Frank Knox" is running serially in an interesting clip sheet issued by the Frank Knox for President Committee. In the first instalment one may read:

"His first job, at the age of eleven, was carrying newspapers. He got up at three o'clock in the morning to deliver 100 papers to subscribers, pay \$1.25 a week. After school he delivered 100 more for \$1 a week."

So far so good. The work was arduous, but it made a man of the little merchant and gave him his first lessons in the freedom of the press. It is the subsequent sentences which give one pause.

"Frank's mother was thrifty, and she taught him to save part of his wages every week. That became a habit. In life and in business he learned never to spend more than his income. His mother taught him that, and upon that lesson he built his newspapers in later life."

Anybody who has not only lived but saved money on \$2.25 a week is likely to set the unemployed upon singularly short rations. Personally I am more attracted by Frank's father than by his mother. The Colonel seems to have learned thrift by both direct and ricochet fire, for it is recorded of William Edwin Knox that he was "trained as a plumber and steamfitter but when Frank was born he was an oyster-market man near Faneuil Hall." Four years later the family moved to Nova Scotia, where William Edwin went into the lobster-canning business. "That was not a success," records the Colonel's biographer, "and the family moved back to Boston, broke."

Next we find the enterprising William Edwin Knox moving out to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to make a fresh start. Here the head of the house went into marketing, but the biographer is forced to record, "He was too easy in giving credit and the business was never a great success."

It is an extremely interesting study for Freudians, for we find this Presidential candidate conditioned by an ambivalent early life. Probably even today he is torn between the impulse to follow his father's easy credit ways and become a New Dealer and the tendency to be swayed by his mother's example and emulate Governor Landon, the Kansas Coolidge. The stimulating candor of the clip sheet makes all things plain. The split tradition of the family has committed the Colonel to a definite political and economic position. His subconscious plants him precisely in the middle of the road. In fact he's rutted in it.

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST has gone in for a series of articles about the freedom of the press. They are reprinted from an address made by M. Lyle Spencer, Dean of the School of Journalism at Syracuse. Mr. Hearst seems much comforted by the statement of the

Dean that the masses do not like American newspapers very much. When the Sage of San Simeon notices people edging away, he likes to be told that there is nothing personal in it.

The Dean thinks that it was monstrous that anybody should have suggested that Colonel Lindbergh went abroad because he and his family had been plagued by the high-power methods which Hearst executives imposed upon their reporters and camera men. I assume that the good Dean has J. David Stern in mind when he says, "The whole yarn smelled of holier-than-thou newspaper practice, where one paper or one group gets and avails itself of an opportunity to throw stink bombs at a competitor—usually to its own eventual discredit."

But there has been no denial of the New York *Post's* story that Hearst camera men forced the Lindbergh car to the sidewalk so that they could get a picture of the baby. Just why the Dean feels that it is discreditable for one paper to expose such practices in another I do not know. It may be that the Dean's nose for buttered bread is even keener than his nose for news.

The Dean's device for capturing lost confidence is that all publishers should stick together and never peach upon each other. He recommends this unholy alliance as a means of protecting the freedom of the press. The best and the liveliest journalism can be found, in my opinion, only where competing publications keep sharp check upon each other. When all the publishers begin to walk around arm in arm, the reading public suffers. I like to see editors get mad at each other, because in such circumstances they may begin to make interesting revelations.

Of course, there ought to be some regular service which studies news just as advertising has been studied. Such a service might furnish information on how much benzoate of soda the reader is getting with his political dispatches and how much saccharine per column on the editorial page. Certainly when a publisher uses artificial coloring matter the clients have a right to know. And in spite of Dean Spencer's suggestion that any kind of skulduggery can be hushed up by a little friendly cooperation, I have a notion that the truth will pop out. My only worry is that the truth, like the groundhog, is apt to get frightened by its shadow and scurry back into hiding once again.

THE punishment of General Hagood, while wholly in line with precedent, was a stupid political blunder on the part of the Administration. And yet in the long run it may not work against the President. When he does a foolish thing the recollection of it is usually wiped out by the much more stupid things said or done by his opponents. Colonel McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune* is the lifesaver in this case with the statement, "If we do not have a Republican victory next fall, this nation will cease to be a republic."

HEYWOOD BROUN

BOOKS and the ARTS

THE POLITICAL SUBJECT

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

A FRIEND of mine who had been a student of Professor John Dewey once had the temerity to ask him an impertinent question. "Why is it," he demanded, "that you express your ideas in a form which the democracy you so much admire cannot possibly understand?" Professor Dewey put his arm about the disciple's shoulder and replied with that mildness so characteristic of him, "I am making a career for you younger men whose business it will be to translate my works."

Not infrequently I have wished that the same question might be put to various imaginative writers—poets in particular—who address the proletariat in a manner which seems to assume that the typical worker is naturally well grounded in the symbolist poets and the work of Mr. Eliot. One such is Stephen Spender, but Mr. Spender has just published a volume of criticism,* which may be later reviewed, one purpose of which seems to be to disentangle him from the embraces of those who over-hastily and over-enthusiastically welcomed him into the ranks of propagandist poets.

He has, he admits, a "political subject," but the phrase implies something a good deal less specific than might at first sight be supposed. It means that he writes about man as part of society, that the world of thoughts and feelings with which he deals is not exclusively either a private or a hypothetical one. But it is far from meaning that his poetry is intended to advocate a specific political program or that its purpose is to serve as a "weapon" in any sense acceptable to those who like to talk of the "artistic front."

He is, to be sure, a "socialist artist." As such he is concerned with "realizing in his own work the ideas of a classless society; that is to say, applying those ideas to the life around him and giving them their reality." But he is not "primarily concerned with ways and means" because—dreadful heresy to those who insist that attitudes are the product of conditions, not conditions the product of attitudes—"if man changes . . . the economic system will change also." What is worse, Mr. Spender also quotes with approval some of the strictures made by Max Eastman in his "Artists in Uniform." The artist must not be subservient to a party because it is his business to criticize in terms of their human value the results produced by any party's activity. "Unless artists insist upon their right to criticize, to be human and even 'humanitarian,' communism will become a frozen era, another ice age."

One does not have to follow left-wing criticism very closely to perceive a certain drift in the direction of the first article of Mr. Spender's creed. I fancy, for example,

that James T. Farrell, whose "A Note on Literary Criticism" appeared in the two last issues of *The Nation*, would agree quite heartily; and even in Russia there seems to be less and less of the tendency to demand that all art shall be directly didactic or hortatory in tone. But unless I am very much mistaken there is far less disposition to recognize the second claim which Mr. Spender puts forth in behalf of the artist—the claim, that is to say, to a certain autonomy by virtue of which the artist himself has a right to decide what approach he shall employ.

Mr. Spender, if I understand him aright, wants the function of the artist to be recognized as coordinate with that of the political philosopher. To him it seems that the independence of the poet's judgment is necessary if criticism from his point of view is to have any value; and it is just this independence of which the Russian state seems to have only a very faint conception. It may, for example, order a revival of the classic, or decide at a given moment that the time has come to encourage the production of works not narrowly political in their implications. But by the very fact that it does so it indicates clearly enough that it still assumes that artistic policy will continue to be imposed upon the artist and from above.

Some months ago, for example, writers were told that they should now concern themselves more actively than they had been accustomed to do with romantic love. There even appeared in one of the leading newspapers an article which urged some form of public rebuke for those citizens who showed themselves incapable of experiencing this noble emotion. But though this change was urged upon me at the time as a striking example of increasing liberalism, I could not but feel that there was more significance in the fact that one was now commanded to love than in the fact that the official disapproval of this activity had been at last removed. "Liberalism" of this sort reminds one of the sort so dictatorially enforced by the Great Catherine in Shaw's play, or even of the little sketch in which Miss Beatrice Lillie appeared as a harassed cockney mother spending the day with her fretful child at a dismal seaside resort. When the child whimpered too much, Miss Lillie put him across her knee and exclaimed to the accompaniment of sundry resounding smacks: "I brought you here to enjoy yourself, and enjoy yourself you will."

Only a week or two ago the famous and much-feted operatic composer Shostakovich was suddenly cast forth into outer darkness. Without warning *Pravda* declared a newly formulated conviction that the true spirit of Soviet music was classical rather than experimental, and denounced Shostakovich's work. Almost immediately it was all but banished from the Moscow theaters. The Union

*"The Destructive Element." By Stephen Spender. Houghton Mifflin and Company. \$2.

of Soviet composers rearranged its program for the coming year to eliminate his operas and ballets. The Bolshoi Theater canceled plans to present his opera "Lady Macbeth of Mtensk"—only recently a great triumph—and two other Moscow theaters stopped rehearsals on his recent ballet "Limpid Stream."

Perhaps all this indicates that the Soviet authorities are to be congratulated upon recognizing the claims of the classical style in the arts. But it certainly does not indicate any tendency to recognize the right and the duty of the artist to explore in his own way and from his own point of view the artistic possibilities of the world in which he finds himself. Neither does it indicate any disposition to permit him to appeal to the suffrage of his audience. On the contrary it reaffirms the conception of him as one whose function it is to follow a party line which is artistic as well as political.

Almost at the moment when this artistic purge was taking place George Soule was publishing in the *New Republic* his opinion that "the Russian theater is as far ahead of ours as our plumbing is ahead of theirs." Perhaps. But Mr. Shostakovich, sitting amid the ruins of his reputation, may be pardoned if he wonders whether it would also be true to say that the playwright in Moscow is that much better off than the plumber in New York.

BOOKS

Appraising the Dictators

DICTATORSHIP IN THE MODERN WORLD. Edited by Guy Stanton Ford. University of Minnesota Press. \$2.50.

THIS book has destroyed another myth, namely, that scholars when they write are ponderous, prolix, and obscure. The essays in this volume are brilliant, brief, and to the point.

Although the authors show little love for dictators or dictatorship, they maintain an objectivity that is refreshing in these propaganda-infested days. Like Veblen in his treatment of the toper, they endeavor to understand rather than to defend or denounce. They are concerned with dictatorships as a system rather than with dictators as individuals. Mussolini may be a "Sawdust Caesar," Hitler a political Savonarola, and Stalin a glorified "Charlie" Murphy, but modern dictatorship is, as Max Lerner says, something more than a madman's dream of power. Nor is it merely a form of crisis government. Dictatorship in the modern world is not to be confused with the exercise of emergency powers under a Defense of the Realm Act, an Article 48, or a National Recovery Act. Max Lerner writes:

It is a complete scheme of life. It seems at first sight to represent a reversal of our whole cultural and political drift during the past three centuries. Actually, however, it is a direct and natural outgrowth of our present society. The dilemmas which fascism [for example] seeks to resolve are our dilemmas, the institutions it wished to conserve are the basic economic institutions of our society, the loyalties it appeals to are the loyalties that attach to the nation-state which we have created. The militarism it exploits is the same militarism that leads to our own wars, the passions it channels to its purposes are the race and class passions that grow out of the competitive struggle inherent in our society.

In short, modern dictatorship of the Italian or German variety finds its institutional roots and its ideological rationalizations in the capitalistic, competitive culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It represents, in a sense, nationalistic capitalism with its democratic mask removed. More precisely, perhaps, in the case of Germany its evolution follows the familiar Aristotelian cycle of democracy degenerating through demagoguery into dictatorship. The skilful mobilization of discontent growing out of social insecurity provides mass support for a class state. National Socialism is not to be regarded as an alien system cruelly imposed upon a bankrupt German democracy. Its roots extend deep into German culture—deeper, indeed, than the roots of the Weimar system. Moreover, it is not a mere imitation of Italian fascism.

Those [says Harold Deutsch] who are disposed to regard the Hitlerite dictatorship as inspired in the main by the example of Mussolini and Italy forget that the National Socialist program was conceived two years before the *fascisti* marched on Rome. This misconception goes hand in hand with the tendency to confine the search for the origins of Hitlerism to the sequelae of the World War, which is to forget that Nietzsche and Houston Stewart Chamberlain ever lived, and to interpret Spenglerism as a post-war phenomenon.

This volume will be disconcerting to those who would fit modern dictatorship into a single rigid mold. The pattern shifts from time to time and place to place, not only in organization but in terms of origins and objectives. J. Fred Rippy's gallery of Spanish-American dictators offers abundant evidence of this. One common element, however, appears to be necessary. All of them—Juárez, Díaz, Santa Cruz, Páez, Flores, Sarmiento, and Castillo—arose out of chaos, confusion, insecurity, and social collapse. It was the absence rather than the presence of a stable hierarchy of wealthy capitalists, churchmen, and landlords that made dictatorship possible, and even necessary. Nor was it altogether evil.

During the age of the dictators [says Professor Rippy] population and wealth increased, and progress was made in art and literature. The expense of the new order was great, but its benefits should not be ignored.

The similarity in method of Fascist and Communist dictatorships has tended to obscure the fundamental contrasts in origin and purpose which they embody. Both, it is true, are for the moment anti-democratic. But the Communist's opposition is based on the identification of contemporary democracy with monopoly capitalism, whereas the Fascist assault is based on the assumption that democracy is but the advance agent of equalitarian socialism. Communism is secular, scientific, and pragmatic; and in theory, at least, represents the logical culmination of the democratic principles of liberty and equality. The recent liberalization of election methods in Russia and the relaxation of repressive measures are cited as evidence of the essentially democratic purpose of the Communist regime. Moreover, communism is internationalist in outlook. Fascist dictatorship is "charismatic, nationalistic, and permanent." It represents a philosophy of regimentation and inequality as the enduring principle of social organization.

Fascism can claim that dictatorship is an essential element of its doctrine and therefore the justified means to achieve an end perfectly in harmony with the means. Communism regards dictatorship only as the necessity of a transitional period; for it, the question remains open how far the way followed will influence the end pursued.

It would be presumptuous to undertake even a partial summary of the contents of this remarkable volume. Henry Spencer's essay on the Mussolini regime is a brilliant account of its origin, methodology, and objectives. Nowhere have I seen so much information packed into so few pages. The same may be

said of Denis Brogan's sober discussion of the Prospects for Democracy. It is surprising, for example, that such militaristic leaders as Hitler and Mussolini should overlook the fact that the last war was won by democratic governments. In the long run any government to survive must meet the minimum expectations of its people. Ultimately the dictator's fate will "depend upon his ability to deal successfully with the foreign and domestic difficulties of his country." How long the masses will "be content with the continuous and reckless drawing of bills upon the future" remains to be seen.

PETER H. ODEGARD

Races, Nations, and Fathers-in-Law

WE EUROPEANS. By Julian S. Huxley and A. C. Haddon. With a Contribution by A. M. Carr-Saunders. Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

HITLER and Madison Grant will not approve of this book; nor will those who, fearing the destruction of their own particular cultural group, are willing to deny their intelligence in their frantic efforts to maintain their prestige. Such people have seized upon heredity and, pointing to its power to maintain differences between pure breeds of domestic animals, have in the name of science developed a mythology of pure human breeds. By ascribing a heroic past to one of these, argument is found for its heroic future, and a continuity of heredity is invoked to combat social discontinuity.

This doctrine has been advertised so vociferously and with so much show of conviction that it has led a modern nation to commit cultural suicide in order, ostensibly, to reestablish its mythical "racial" unity and thereby its legendary preeminence. But Germans include such diverse ancestry that before this fictitious unity can be realized, many besides that cultural group called Jews will have to be eliminated. Even the present leaders, who exalt the Teutonic type as fair, long-headed, tall, and virile, include among themselves the opposite traits: Hitler's darkness, Rosenberg's broad head, Goebbels's shortness, Göring's stoutness, and Streicher's lack of virility. It is high time that the rest of the world should hear from unimpassioned ethnologists before all minds become emotionally blind to ethnological facts.

Read this book and thereafter hesitate to speak of *races* of men! For here is set down for all to read the history of biological differences between European groups. Unanswerable questions cloud many parts of this history, and the necessary qualifications make difficult reading, but one point stands out with great clearness: that different groups of men have wandered back and forth over Europe from earliest times, and whenever two groups have met, interbreeding has occurred. In Europe today all peoples, no matter how uniform their culture, come from mixed ancestry. There are no races comparable to domestic breeds. But animal experimentation does explain the continued variability shown by men of mixed ancestry. The breed is not a unit of heredity; even the purest breed of dog depends on great numbers of hereditary units (genes) which are held in constant assortment by mating within the breed; but after outbreeding these units reappear in all possible combinations and continue to recombine for many generations. The diversity of the geographic distribution of these units gives the impression of dramatic differences when extremes are compared, but between all of these diverse combinations of units occur continuous intergrades. National boundaries do not and cannot separate certain groups of genes. Tribal loyalty has evolved into patriotism, but the biological relationship has dropped out; the *pater* in patriotism is only a father-in-law.

The gist of the book is given by its introductory and con-

cluding chapters and its maps. The independence and repetitiousness of the various chapters on the history, methods, and pitfalls of ethnology, as well as those on specific ethnic groups, give the impression of a collected series of essays. A shorter, better-integrated presentation might have more influence and command greater respect. While pleading for objective study, the authors give much space to frankly conjectural accounts of certain ethnic groups. To go so far into Mendelian heredity as to discuss the recombinations following a cross involving ten independent genes, without mentioning that genes within the same chromosome do not show this independent reassortment (the whole subject of linkage), may seem unfair to hostile critics. And, finally, to show by photographs of sixteen persons (answers at the back) that nations include individuals divergent from the reputed type does not go very far toward proving that nations are not biological units; particularly when it is urged that not averages but frequency distributions are required to describe populations.

But whatever its imperfections, the book stands alone, and Messrs. Huxley, Haddon, and Carr-Saunders are to be thanked for rendering an important service. Here you will find a sane view of the contribution of ethnology to political problems.

E. C. MACDOWELL

Brilliant Taxidermy

THE THINKING REED. By Rebecca West. The Viking Press. \$2.50.

YOUNG, beautiful, rich, and tragically widowed, Isabelle was the daughter of one of those St. Louis families which have never lost their French character. What she dreaded more than anything else was to be betrayed by impulse into an act of violence, and all the effort of her sensitive and humorous mind was bent on imposing order and reason on her life.

It was her perverse fate, therefore, to be constantly in a position from which only violence could save her. In her loneliness after the death of her husband she fled to the "violent frivolity" of André, whose mind was as mediocre as his body was beautiful, and who brought to love "a midwifely sentimentousness." From him she rescued herself by an act unreasonable and disorderly in its violence, hoping thus to be free to accept the quiet haven which Laurence Vernon, master of serene Mount Iris, had offered her. But he had been witness to what he conceived to be her madness; from his new coldness she fled to the "violent heat" of Marc Sallafranque, and married him. Though he enjoyed kicking waiters with his yellow shoes, and insulting dowagers, she found peace with him until the moment when from his drunkenness and his insane passion for gambling there was no escape except a new violence on her part, another and still more epoch-making disorderly scene. Thereafter she hated him for the violence to which he had driven her; but in the end, inevitably, she must return to him because, in spite of his violence and irrationality, in spite of the fact that "all his ties were with the strong and not with the weak, he would not have a sparrow fall anywhere in the world."

This is the plot; but the plot does not matter. For though Miss West assembles characters and backgrounds and analyzes them with the understanding and neatness so familiar in her criticism, she cannot be said to be a novelist; she is the most brilliant of taxidermists. On her wide travels in the jungles of Europe she has captured many strange beasts; and she arranges them in her pleasant sunlit museum with an unerring eye for their peculiarities, in attitudes which reveal their essential characteristics, and against backgrounds which she herself has

painted in colors only a little more precise and bright than nature. One looks at them and cries, "For a moment I thought they were alive!"

Miss West writes with the easiest brilliance; the broad river of her style is broken constantly with small waterfalls of epigrams, always unexpected and always delightful. But all this ease and brilliance and humor never conceal the seriousness of Miss West's mind, or her loyalty to her convictions. With the traditionally masculine weapons of logic and irony she combats the limitations which men at their best still impose upon their women; most bitterly of all, the masculine invention of "feminine intuition," that phrase by which men rationalize their determination not to admit that there is such a thing as feminine intelligence. Beneath the fantastic exteriors with which human beings laboriously fortify themselves, she can detect weakness, fatuity, but also decency; and that decency is the chief concern of her main characters, and the chief reason why a real liking, for both characters and author, early imposes itself on the reader.

KATHARINE SIMONDS

The Uses of Plausibility

THE SON OF MARIETTA. By Johan Fabricius. Translated from the Dutch by Irene Clephane and David Hallett. Little, Brown and Company. \$3.

AS a rule the novel of romance prefers plot to plausibility, unless the latter follows gratuitously from the former. It is a matter of small concern with practitioners of this order that a given effect, instead of proceeding from a given cause, is eventually determined by the requirements of pace and suspense. As long as he counts himself amused, the reader, so the theory goes, is prepared to anticipate instead of appraise; and it accordingly becomes the chief task of the romancer—in the opinion of romancers—to invent as complexly as he can.

Johan Fabricius's three-in-one romance is notable for the reason that it attempts a fusion of the two objectives and fails, not through a lack of either plausibility or inventiveness, but through an inadequate distribution of the parts. In general "The Son of Marietta" need make no apologies for the genre to which, by virtue of its eighteenth-century background and general derring-do, it must be assigned. Despite the cavalier vigor with which he has attacked the problem of projecting an age and a country foreign to his own, the author makes it clear that he is moved by something less florid than the picaresque ideal. For the space of at least a book and a half—that portion of the novel which concerns the fortunes of Marietta up to the birth of Benedetto, her son,—the story achieves as rich and sensitive a plausibility as is possible with the devices of the professed realist; and the entire section takes on a distinction in direct proportion to the justness of this portrait.

It is with the young manhood of the hero that the reader first senses the sharp division of emphasis. Fabricius here gathers cloak and sword into an old portmanteau and sends the young Benedetto packing to Venice and a certain "little Gothic palace in the Rio di San Felice." We are permitted a glimpse of the palace, planted into its setting like a slide in a stereopticon:

Pale gray and slender rose the little Gothic palace out of the green-black waters of the Rio di San Felice. It had small rose-windows and a balcony of carved stone tendrils and foliage. . . . Behind a low wall of the same tender gray stood several austere cypresses, black as ink. . . . The garden opened onto a miniature harbor just large enough to contain a gondola, and protected by a gate that autumn had covered with bright red leaves.

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No devotee of the popular operetta will fail to identify at sight the "green-black waters" and the "balcony of carved stone," "the cypresses black as ink," the little "harbor just large enough to contain a gondola," and the postern gate picked out synthetically with "bright red leaves"—and identify them in terms of cardboard. Nor is it probable that the register of chapter heads which follows will call forth in such a reader any but the very homeliest sensations of rapport: The Fair Maid in the Box, A Woman Without a Heart, Music in the Night, In a Garden by the Brenta. For this reader, the subsequent rehearsal of Benedetto's unhappy amours with Gracias, the Spanish seductress, and Leah, the melancholy young Jewess, will recommend itself with the vested authority of the obvious, the shopworn, and the traditional. But it is hardly to be expected that those who found the preceding volume and a half reason for gratulation will share his enthusiasm.

The "problem" here is of course one of proportion, of focus, primarily. It is readily summed up in the query: To what extent may the writer of romance who strives after something more than diversion alone defer the appraisal of character to the simple detailing of events *qua* events? The query is not a "modern" one and has been tellingly prosecuted in the past by such a work as Thackeray's "Henry Esmond." There, at least, it is made sufficiently plain that a mirror held up to one century is still a mirror held up to all of nature.

BEN BELITT

More Books for Guinea Pigs

AMERICAN CHAMBER OF HORRORS. By Ruth de Forest Lamb. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

GUINEA PIGS NO MORE. By J. B. Matthews. Covici-Friede. \$2.

EAT, DRINK, AND BE WARY. By F. J. Schlink. Covici-Friede, \$2.

THE education of the consumer continues apace, with three more books on the popular practice of fraud. Two are by those prolific friends of the consumer, F. J. Schlink and J. B. Matthews of Consumers' Research; the third is a dignified, well-documented, and effective apologia for the Food and Drug Administration, written by its chief educational officer, Ruth de Forest Lamb.

Her book, "American Chamber of Horrors," is, according to the blurb writer, not "official," but unofficially the administration's chief must surely have blessed its author and wished the book godspeed. For Miss Lamb writes of the courageous war waged by food-and-drug men against adulterators, quacks, and charlatans. To members of Consumers' Research who have been regaled with stories and incidents of the sloth, dishonesty, and big-business bias of the administration, Miss Lamb's presentation of the other side of the picture will be both novel and instructive. Yet the administration's budget for 1936—an increase over previous years—allows only a little more than a cent per person for safeguarding consumers; there are only seventy-eight food-and-drug inspectors for field work, and another handful for laboratory and administrative duties. Equally ridiculous, Miss Lamb points out, is the antiquated and inadequate act governing the administration.

In making her case for the Food and Drug Administration, and for the passage of the Copeland bill, the author repeats the now old but still horrible story of the dye that blinded one young woman and killed another but is still within the law and being sold; and the story of the depilatory made of rat poison against which the administration has no legal authority to

act. She is not interested merely in muckraking or in naming names. Dispassionately, with none of the hysterics which have weakened the later works of Schlink and his school, Miss Lamb conducts her readers through the American Chamber of Horrors and points to the woeful impotency of the present consumer agencies. Thus far Miss Lamb agrees with other critics of the present set-up. She differs, however, in the suggested remedy. "With all its defects," she says, "the Copeland bill is not so bad as opponents on the extreme left would have you believe. Their opinions are naturally colored by their political philosophy, with which no purely remedial legislation can be entirely harmonious. . . . They may, indeed, be entirely right. But we are still living under a capitalist system, and unless we propose to overthrow that system we must, if we are going to correct such abuses as those which flourish in the food, drug, and cosmetic industries, be realistic about them."

This is a book which everyone, even those surfeited by exposés written for the hundred million guinea pigs, should read. Pictures of the Chamber of Horrors exhibits add point to the text and the appendices are in themselves a worth-while contribution to consumer literature, including as they do an outline of the legislative history of the Copeland bill, data on the cost and composition of such well-known cosmetics as Coty's, Elizabeth Arden, Bourjois, and others, and a government report on the grades of 500 advertised items of canned food.

Mr. Matthews's book also has a valuable appendix, a proposed enabling act for a Department of the Consumer, drafted by Oscar S. Cox, assistant corporation counsel of New York City. Unquestionably consumers would be more adequately served if the several government agencies which now devote a part of their activities to safeguarding the public's interest were integrated into such a department and implemented with power to control business practice. For the rest, Mr. Matthews's book, in spite of its philosophic pretensions, has little to offer to sound social theory. In his brave new world the capitalistic system would continue under the dictatorship of the consumer. Problems of quality, standards, and adulteration would be solved; but no attention would be given to production and the distribution of wealth. Mr. Matthews is a rabid anti-Communist. He offers empirical evidence of the failure of Soviet Russia: seven out of eight samples of Soviet toilet soap were ranked by Consumers' Research standards as "C—Not Recommended"; Russian face powder and contraceptives were found equally undesirable.

Mr. Schlink's "Eat, Drink, and Be Wary" is the first of his Consumers' Research crusading books undertaken without the assistance of a collaborator. The experiment is not successful. Lacking a steady hand, Mr. Schlink flounders hysterically and indulges in shrill outcries against his pet hates. Badly organized, repetitious, and devoid of scientific objectivity, the Schlink invective loses force and meaning. This is unfortunate because there is a real need for a popular exposé of food frauds and faddists and of dangerous practices current in the food industries. While the milk trust, aided by state-supported advertising campaigns, is urging greater consumption of milk, it is instructive—and consoling—to learn that according to respectable medical opinion a quart of milk a day per child and a pint per adult are too much. There are many families who never could afford this quota and others who never would drink it. However, ranting against pasteurization because the expensive equipment required is out of reach of the small distributor and then waxing indignant over two epidemics of septic sore throat is ridiculous. Muddled thinking and bad temper are evident throughout the book. RUTH BRINDZE

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The Middle Way

SWEDEN: THE MIDDLE WAY. By Marquis W. Childs. Yale University Press. \$2.50.

THIS is a book which deserves the attention that it seems to be winning in the United States. It is a story of a people which has made astonishing progress in ordering to its own advantage the economic machinery of the modern world without violence and without confusion. It seems to the author that what the Swedes have done "constitutes a fairly well-defined middle course . . . between the absolute socialization of Russia and the end development of capitalism in America." He finds the wisdom of the Swedes "above all in their willingness to adjust, to compromise, to meet what appears to be reality. They have not been bound by a 'system,' nor have they been committed to a dogma. In a sense they are the ultimate pragmatists, interested only in the workability of the social order."

In chapters written in a livelier style than the foregoing quotation might suggest the author gives a very readable account of the achievement of the Swedish consumers' cooperatives; the admirable work in which the state, cities, and cooperatives have joined forces to provide low-cost and attractive housing; the role of the state in industry, especially in the production of power; the relation of the king, the Socialists, and the capitalists to one another; and what the farmers, following to some degree Danish practice, which the author reviews in considerable detail, have managed to do for themselves. To anyone who from a soap-box or in a social group wants to prove that able men will work effectively from some other motive than profit and that there can be a democracy in economic life which does function, Mr. Childs has presented an invaluable supply of ammunition.

His book is good, but it would be better if it gave an account of the dynamics of the change which he describes. It is fuller and better in its description of the cooperative movement than of the labor unions and the Socialist Party—the leading party in Sweden, although it does not have an absolute majority. Swedish socialism is definitely of the right wing, but it is socialism, and as such not so exclusively pragmatic as Mr. Childs implies. Moreover, as I read his book I remembered some remarks made to me by a representative of the Swedish Socialist press in America a few weeks ago, in which he expressed grave doubts concerning the adequacy of the security provided in the Swedish Utopia.

It is fair to Mr. Childs to say that he himself recognizes the limitations upon the great Swedish achievements to a degree which his hasty readers and reviewers have overlooked. For instance, the country's recovery would have been quite impossible if Sweden had not been able to profit by the friction between Great Britain and Soviet Russia to increase its timber exports to Britain at Russia's expense. Moreover, Sweden's mines and iron and steel industries have been the beneficiary of the European craze for rearmament. However much Socialists and cooperators may admire the excellence of Sweden's internal economy, recovery or prosperity based upon a race in armaments constitutes no Socialist Utopia. Denmark and little Iceland, quite comparable to Sweden in the excellence of their internal arrangements, have lost not gained by the hates, the fears, and the tariff wars of the larger nations.

Clearly it will take more than the pragmatic shrewdness, the innate democracy and good sense which a homogeneous people like the Swedes have displayed, to solve problems of plenty, peace, and freedom in our troubled world. No purely imitative policy is possible in America, whether the model be

on the one hand Russia or on the other Sweden. But when all this is said there is a great deal that is reassuring, suggestive, even inspiring in what not only the Swedes but the other Scandinavian peoples have accomplished through their co-operatives, their labor unions, and their Socialist parties.

NORMAN THOMAS

DRAMA

Mr. Cohan Presents . . .

GEORGE M. COHAN is at it again. This time the play is called "Dear Old Darling" (Alvin Theater), and again the outline is that of the "crook play" which Mr. Cohan has favored more than once before. As usual it will entertain the popular audience of whose limitations he is seldom unaware; but as usual also it is, in addition, part of a private joke the exact nature of which he has never revealed because, perhaps, he does not quite understand it himself.

In the earlier days Mr. Cohan was content merely to build a better claptrap than his neighbor and to let the world beat a path to his door. If "Little Johnny Jones" and "Forty-Five Minutes from Broadway" were anything more than showman's stuff, the fact was too skilfully concealed, and at the period when they were written their author seemed at one with the audience he entertained. But as time went on Mr. Cohan began to see through the shoddiness of his tradition and to write satires on himself. Like the more sophisticated sort of prestidigitator who exposes his own tricks, he took the spectator into his confidence and concentrated attention upon the skill with which the thing could be done. Every moment which the audience could be inveigled into taking with real seriousness was followed by one in which it was invited to laugh at itself, and the motto was always, "It's fun to be fooled."

"Dear Old Darling" follows this method, and as usual it is Mr. Cohan as actor, no less than as playwright, who contributes the almost unanalyzable charm of a personality so blatant, so aggressive, and so cocksure that it would be offensive in anyone who did not have his matchless gift for a disarming blarney. Always the center of any stage, he cavorts with abandon and "mugs" outrageously. He is, indeed, the one triumphant example we have of the kind of actor whose whole success depends upon the fact that no one forgets for more than a moment that he is that particular actor no matter what part he happens to be playing. It is Cohan the showman and Cohan the personality of whom we are always aware. Every scene begins with a "Now watch me take you in!" and ends with a "Didn't I do that well?" But in between, the show is a very good show indeed. Mr. Cohan has the mercurial but irresistible insincerity of the successful scamp. He can bluster or cajole, dazzle or ingratiate. One moment he turns on the tremolo of sentiment and the next looses a wisecrack of abysmal cynicism. He is appealing one instant, cocky the next, and mocking the third. But somehow he is not inconsistent because at bottom one is somehow aware that one reality is always present—the reality of Mr. Cohan himself delighting in his gift for exploiting his own insincerity. It makes little difference that this particular play happens to be about a somewhat self-confident old gentleman who is the victim of a blackmail racket involving an eighteen-year-old girl who pursues him implacably with declarations of love. These matters are merely



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If Mr. Cohan had enjoyed the advantages or disadvantages of a literary education and of an experience with the sophisticated world, he might have turned out to be a playwright like Ferenc Molnar. His preference for adroitness over sincerity is much the same; but the difference is, of course, that Mr. Cohan belongs to Broadway about as exclusively as anyone could. His idea of an elegant home—as revealed, for example, in the principal set of this play—is the idea of a salesman for a pay-as-you-go furniture establishment. His idea of the elegantly *dégage* includes the audible sucking of his teeth before the delivery of a devastating comeback. Nothing could have produced exactly him except the particular show business in which he grew up, and he is, in his way, as American as Babbitt—the eternal Irish scamp as modified by New York. No one not familiar with him and his tradition could possibly understand why he has been for years the most popular personality of the New York theater both behind the curtain and in front of it. Fifty years hence no historian will be able to understand what he was like or why audiences took him to their hearts in precisely the way they did. The fact remains, nevertheless, that he is irresistible. If the present play had been either written or acted by anyone else it would have been merely another crook play to be forgotten by tomorrow. Actually it will stick in the memory because one will not be able to forget Mr. Cohan doing any one of the dozen vivid, foolish, and essentially insincere things he does.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

FILMS

The Higher Jingoism

VIEWED quite generally "Rhodes" (Roxy) is an inferior motion picture. It moves slowly when it moves at all; each separate episode is allowed to die before the next one is born, so that we miss the magic of elision, the sense of having stepped from one scene into another without knowing that our feet had left the ground; and the South African settings (veritable, I believe) too seldom appear to be taking part in the action, with the result that such figures as Rhodes (Walter Huston) and Jameson (Basil Sydney) are likely to loom up with the effect of accident. Nevertheless, the film possesses the merit, in a fortnight otherwise barren, of raising a discussable and indeed a highly interesting question. Two other films have raised it recently—"Itto," a French work dealing with the conquest of Morocco, and "Frontier," a Russian work dealing with the suppression of a counter-revolutionary minority; but the question asks itself clearly enough in "Rhodes" alone.

The question had better be made to emerge from a description of what goes on. Put briefly, the story is of Rhodes's rise in South Africa from the day he met Dr. Jameson and was told he had six months (or years) to live until the day of his burial among the great stones of his favorite mountain. Between these limits he lived the life we know, and the only thing of interest at the moment is the spirit in which the events of this life are set forth. Doubtless they could have been set forth in any one of a hundred ways; and the information that the film comes from London would perhaps

lead to expectations of something on the jingo side, something empire-minded. But if the film ever took that tone I was worse than deaf to it. What I heard, in fact, was an undertone of reservation so clear and strong that I could not but take it to be the music of the piece—the intended music, the conscious burden. The song it sang said in effect that Rhodes might after all have been terribly mistaken; that the destiny about which he was so eloquent might simply have been tenth-rate; that civilization and colonization may combine at any time to produce something either ineffably absurd or grossly cruel; that progress is an illusion; that empires are built not merely upon blood but upon error. Why otherwise were all our sympathies fixed on Kruger and King Lobengula? Why was Anna Carpenter allowed to be so persuasive in her criticism of Rhodes? Why was Jameson so peculiarly offensive? And why was Rhodes himself, played though he happened to be by Walter Huston, so stuffed with nothingness, so impotent to carry conviction? Oscar Homolka as Kruger and Ndanisa Kumalo as King Lobengula were the stars of the film for reasons other than those having to do with their great native capacities; they were stars, I think, because the rest of the sky was dark, and because the direction had put its heart in them alone. The direction had not believed in Rhodes and empire. It had not believed the story it was presumably telling.

The parallel with "Itto" and "Frontier" is quite exact. Our sympathies, or at any rate mine, were wholly with the Moroccan chieftain who was slain in his castle, so that the splendor of his burial by the magnanimous French failed even for a second to make me stop asking what on earth the French were doing there. So with the wilderness people of "Frontier"; I could not but resent the superior numbers of those who came from Moscow to wipe them out, and their inferior imaginations. But the question still to be asked is this: Was any of the three films thus intended? And if so, where has propaganda got to? The cultivation of ambiguity is something that any art comes to in its prime—or perhaps a bit beyond its prime. Is the art of propaganda, then, ripe to the point of rottenness; ready, in other words, to become "pure" art? I do not know. I merely ask the question, and admit in passing that there may be nothing in it after all. The Moors, the Boers, and the Russian minorities were conquered long enough ago for sentiment to have come full circle. Northern books and films about the Civil War have long been prone to take the Southern, the defeated side. Perhaps it is only time that tells us what to do in such cases—I doubt, for instance, that Haile Selassie can be the hero of any Italian film before 1960.

"The Voice of Bugle Ann" (Center Theater) borrows several actors, including Lionel Barrymore, from "Ah, Wilderness" without making the best use of them; managing, strangely enough, to be at the same time pedestrian and sentimental about the fox hound of Missouri. "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine" (Paramount), advertised as "100 per cent natural color," seemed to me to hit 175 per cent, especially in its browns and blues; but its feud was well managed. "Le Bonheur" (Cinéma de Paris), based on the play by Henri Bernstein about an anarchist who fell in love with a wealthy movie actress he had been ordered to assassinate, seemed to me false and trivial in spite of certain fine moments. As for Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, I like them as well as anybody does, but wish that someone would write a tolerable story for them. The story of "Follow the Fleet" is even more tiresome than that of "Top Hat." Such charming persons deserve at least a vehicle that will hold together past the first dance—as "Roberta" did, I seem to remember, until the very end.

MARK VAN DOREN

Joseph Wood Krutch says:

CALL IT A DAY. *Morosco Theater.* Gay and delightful comedy about what almost happened to an English family on the first dangerous day of spring.

DEAD END. *Belasco Theater.* A play about gangsters in the making on an East River waterfront. More a good show than a great drama, but a very good show indeed.

END OF SUMMER. *Guild Theater.* The wittiest of American playwrights sets a group of interesting people to talking about the world as we find it. Ina Claire and Osgood Perkins help make a very happy evening.

ETHAN FROME. *National Theater.* The apparently impossible task of dramatization of Edith Wharton's novel achieved with conspicuous success. Outstanding performances by Pauline Lord, Ruth Gordon, and Raymond Massey.

LIBEL. *Henry Miller Theater.* Exciting English courtroom play. Surprisingly probable for this sort of thing and superbly acted.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. *Plymouth Theater.* Amazingly successful adaptation, brilliantly staged and acted. A thoroughly delightful evening in the theater.

VICTORIA REGINA. *Broadhurst Theater.* Delightful series of scenes from Laurence Housman's drama stunningly acted by Helen Hayes and others. Fairer to the matron queen than Strachey but funny nevertheless and charming besides.

FEDERAL THEATER PROJECT PLAYS: "American Holiday," *Manhattan Theater*; "Chalk Dust," *Daly's Theater*.

Mark Van Doren says:

AH, WILDERNESS. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Eugene O'Neill's touching and searching comedy of high-school days translated into a film which charms by its own right. Full of recognitions for the middle-aged.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* The Marx Brothers in their best picture to date. Hilarious and brilliant.

ANNIE OAKLEY. *R.K.O.* A minor American masterpiece based on the life of Buffalo Bill's best-loved sharpshooter. Barbara Stanwyck as Annie Oakley divides the honors with Sitting Bull.

MODERN TIMES. *Charles Chaplin.* Charlie Chaplin returns to the screen disguised as his old self and fulfils every expectation. Should be seen by everyone—and heard, for he has sound effects.

THE 39 STEPS. *Alexander Korda.* Months old, but should be seen wherever possible. A swift and beautiful thriller set in the Highlands, and one of several films which argue British leadership in the immediate future.

THE GHOST GOES WEST. *Alexander Korda.* René Clair's first film in English, with scenes in Scotland and the United States. Clever, satirical, and fanciful, but without the master touch.

THE PRISONER OF SHARK ISLAND. *Fox.* Tells the story of Dr. Mudd, convicted in 1865 of having helped Booth to escape. Somber and powerful; does not spare the spectator.

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Letters to the Editors

A LETTER FROM REXFORD TUGWELL

Dear Sirs: *The Nation* for January 22, 1936, printed an open letter addressed to me and signed by Tom Burke. The case mentioned by Mr. Burke has been investigated and I am glad to present herein an accurate statement of the case of Pierce White of Chambers County, Alabama.

To begin with, we have been unable to establish that Mr. Burke ever interviewed Mrs. Pierce White despite the fact that he opens his letter by boldly asserting, "I have just visited Mrs. Pierce White."

Mr. Burke's accusation that Mrs. White and her four daughters were starving is entirely incorrect. At the request of our own local officials, Miss Elna Carson, director of the Chambers County Welfare Board (not a Resettlement organization), visited Mrs. White's home after her husband had been jailed and found sufficient food to sustain the family.

The assertion that rental and parity checks were collected from the Pierce Whites is not only a falsehood but an impossibility, as the farm on which the Whites were located was not covered by an adjustment contract. The account of Mr. White was given credit for the three bales of cotton mentioned by Mr. Burke. The cotton brought \$120.26, less \$25.40 ginning tax.

Mr. Burke made the following statement: "Pierce White has been in jail for two and one half months now, just for selling about 200 pounds of his own seed cotton." Investigation revealed that Mr. White was sent to prison for six months, plus time to be served in lieu of payment of costs, when he pleaded guilty to trading in farm products (cotton) "between sunset and sunrise" in violation of an Alabama statute.

Mr. White knew he was violating the state statute. He knew further that the cotton involved was covered by a lien and consequently was not his property. He knew still further that he violated, ethically and legally, his agreement with the Resettlement Administration. Mr. White was arrested on a warrant sworn out by L. H. Smith, County Supervisor, who was advised by Vernon E. Jennings, his assistant, of the disposal of the cotton.

As Mr. White had violated the terms of his rehabilitation contract, Mr. Smith

then took steps to drop him from the rehabilitation rolls and to recover property that was pledged as security for his loan. At the same time both Mr. Smith and Mr. Jennings reported to Miss Carson that Mr. White had been arrested and asked that his wife and children be provided with relief, if necessary. Mr. White was unable to secure bail and remained in jail until tried. The law requires that one who signs a bail bond have enough money or property to cover the amount of the bond. This law is not peculiar to Alabama. Mr. Jennings stated that he gave no unsolicited advice in regard to a bond for Mr. White.

I agree that this is an unfortunate case. However, the purpose of the Resettlement Administration is to rehabilitate poverty-stricken farmers by extending them small loans, placing them on good land, and providing them with every possible assistance. Since we deal with almost a half-million farm families, we are forced to operate on a business-like basis in order that we may do the greatest good for the greatest number.

I regret very much that Mr. White brought sorrow to his family by violating both the law of the state of Alabama and his contract with the Resettlement Administration. I regret further that the facts in this case, intentionally or unintentionally, have been misrepresented and distorted.

R. G. TUGWELL, Administrator
Washington, February 12

MR. BURKE REPLIES

Dear Sirs: Mr. Tugwell says he cannot establish the fact that I interviewed Mrs. Pierce White. Two witnesses were present at the interview. At the time I used the name Larry Ward, and Mrs. White wrote to me later under this name. Mr. Tugwell's investigators know, if he does not, why a union organizer finds it necessary to use an assumed name. The Resettlement Investigation office in Birmingham has a copy of Mrs. White's letter. It was, by the way, a plea for aid because she and her children were about to be evicted. Milton McDuff, head of the National Detective Agency, the Birmingham red squad endowed by the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, took the original of the letter from Rob F. Hall, national-committee member of the Share-Croppers' Union, in a raid last

January. Besides, I was interviewed by Resettlement investigators in Birmingham relative to the Pierce White case and gave them all the facts as I knew them.

Maybe Miss Carson of the Chambers County Welfare Board did not believe the White family was starving, but Mr. Tugwell is accepting the opinion of one who is interested in reducing relief rolls. Mrs. White told me she had only corn and peas and a cow that gave half a gallon of milk a day. This is not even what President Roosevelt called a third-class diet. It is the diet that breeds pellagra, sickness, and death, certainly not a diet for a government official to defend.

Few of the rehabilitation farmers know definitely whether or not they signed AAA contracts. It seems odd that a cotton farmer on the resettlement program did not have such a contract. The practice has been to call the resettlement farmers to meetings where they were told to sign the AAA parity and rental checks over to the resettlement field foreman. Mr. White's case is the first exception, for a resettlement cotton farmer, that I have heard of.

The statement that Pierce White "broke the law" by selling his cotton "between sunset and sunrise," and "broke his resettlement contract" by asserting his right to sell his own cotton when he was desperate for money to help his wife through childbirth, brings us to the heart of the case. The law prohibiting the sale of cotton "between sunset and sunrise" is only one of the many laws inflicted on the enslaved white and Negro share-croppers. Mr. Tugwell has denied the resettlement farmers the right to sell their own crops because Resettlement has a lien on the crop for the total debt of the farmer. The resettlement officials have seized entire crops to satisfy this government debt. The resettlement farmers had nothing when they signed contracts for this program, and the Pierce White case, representative of thousands of resettlement cases, shows that they get nothing from the program. Mr. Tugwell has catered to all the traditions of exploitation and persecution peculiar to the South instead of trying to abolish them.

Mr. Tugwell accepts at face value the word of Vernon E. Jennings that "he gave no unsolicited advice in regard to the bond for Mr. White." Did Mr. Tug-

well think that Jennings would indict himself? Did Mr. Tugwell think Jennings's landlord cronies would betray him?

With this type of investigation, and with a screen of technicalities, Mr. Tugwell sees fit to drop the White case as "unfortunate." It is indeed unfortunate that there has to be a White case, and much more unfortunate that the basic elements of the White case are present in thousands of other rehabilitation cases. Does Mr. Tugwell propose to throw up his hands in despair at the problem confronting the Resettlement Administration? Mr. Tugwell can use his power and influence to get Pierce White off the chain gang immediately. He can provide the White family with a farm and decent relief. He can have Vernon Jennings thrown out of office. He can make this case an example and rectify the miserable conditions on resettlement farms all over the South. He can stop the wholesale eviction of resettlement farmers in Chambers County and many other places. He can make sure that resettlement farmers have the right to their crop and that Resettlement does not use the lien on the crop as a means of taking every last thing from the farmers. The right to live comes before debts, and the government should be the first to recognize this.

I told Mr. Tugwell's investigators that they need not expect a full story from these oppressed people without some definite guaranty of protection from landlord terror. If Mr. Tugwell is interested in facts and their social implications, other than those he gets from the landlords and their cronies in the administration, if Mr. Tugwell wants to see social justice done to these poverty-stricken people who raise the cotton for America, he has the power and influence to act.

Mr. Tugwell, by the stand taken in his letter, has forfeited all the right he ever had to be classed as a liberal.

TOM BURKE

Birmingham, Ala., February 20

"POPULAR" AND "SHALLOW"

Dear Sirs: Mark Van Doren's review (in *The Nation* of February 12) of my contribution to "The Movies on Trial" challenges a retort. He accuses me of "the conviction that no movie is worth mentioning as art unless it represents a technical advance over all previous movies. A corollary is that there have been no movies worth mentioning since D. W. Griffith was in his prime—since, in fact,

'Intolerance.'" I hardly think that anything in my essay supports this sweeping interpretation; on the contrary, I devoted many pages to enumerating the principal cinematic achievements which followed, in some cases by many years, the production of "Intolerance."

Further, Mr. Van Doren assumes, "with a touch of horror," that I do not want the cinema to remain popular. The contrary is true; I am very much concerned lest it lose its popularity—this conceivably may happen some day—and disappear completely. But I do not want it to remain popular at the cost of also remaining eternally shallow—a word which Mr. Van Doren does not think I use with discretion—or at the risk of

being turned, as in Russia today, from a serious and vital art into a standardized mass-entertainment. If the film is to remain a mass-art—a dubious and dangerous position, by the way—only on the condition that free and unbridled creative experiment be forever barred from it, then perhaps it had better disappear.

Mr. Van Doren is one of the few film critics whose work I find it easy to respect; but I am frankly disappointed at his misunderstanding of the spirit of my chapter. Perhaps he will see light if I suggest, for example, that poetry, literature, and the drama be completely popularized, first by the elimination of all their unpopular accomplishments to date, and, second, by the future suppression of

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any and all creative efforts that seem, upon preliminary inspection, unlikely to win mass approval.

SEYMOUR STERN

Hollywood, February 22

Dear Sirs: If Mr. Stern and I agree (a) in our desire that the movies remain popular and (b) in our detestation of any attempt which censorship, whatever its form, may make to set them going in an artificial direction, then we would seem to agree on every essential point, and my review would appear to have misrepresented him. I freely admit that his first paragraph is more accurate as an account of the passage in question than my somewhat humorously exaggerated sentence was. But my impression persists that the adjectives "unpopular" and "shallow" have different values for us. They are deep words and I shall not presume to define them; remarking merely that I think I trust the mass judgment farther than Mr. Stern does—provided, of course, that it expresses itself innocently and is not conscious of being a mass judgment. Operating as the several judgments of seventy million individuals it gives the cinema what any art should be delighted to have, an audience both vast and eager. As for "free and unbridled experiment," I consider it necessary but should like to see it happening naturally—that is, at the centers of production and not in little studios set up to worship Art. It is perhaps unfortunate that the cinema ever discovered itself to be an art, or that the deadly distinction between art and entertainment ever thrust itself in. Perfect entertainment is perfect art, and both are trying to be what only Shakespeare ever succeeded in being: perfectly lifelike. Or, if Mr. Stern insists on the word, perfectly shallow.

MARK VAN DOREN

New York, February 25

"SAWDUST CAESAR"

Dear Sirs: While "Sawdust Caesar" represents an immense amount of industry, and although Professor Salvemini reviewed the volume enthusiastically in *The Nation* for January 22, I think attention ought to be called to two points.

1. Mr. Seldes makes the a priori contention that the church is good and that it alone stands for untrammelled expression. On page 259 he says, "It is quite true, as Fascists contend, that all the liberal, democratic, and intelligent minority in Italy . . . had taken refuge in the Azione Cattolica." But on page 246 Seldes writes that the church supported Mussolini in

the Matteotti murder. "This was the only support Mussolini had at the time. *But it was important* [italics mine]." How does one resolve such a contradiction?

2. Mr. Seldes make the a priori assumption that Masonry is good and that fascism is evil. On page 184 he says, "The order . . . *has remained* [italics mine] the standard-bearer of freedom." And then on page 185 I am astonished to read, "From the time the first *fasci* were formed until after the March on Rome, Masonic lodges cooperated, went so far as to organize Fascist locals and to *join the employers in subsidizing Mussolini* [italics mine]." Where does the old Masonic conception of liberty and the rights of man enter the picture?

If we want to fight fascism we need to have facts presented consistently and accurately. While "Sawdust Caesar" has an imposing array of "facts," nevertheless it presents so many loopholes in the defense against fascism that friends of fascism can ridicule the liberals' efforts to preserve the old rights.

ALFRED KLAUSLER

Glendive, Mont., February 10

A PEOPLE'S THEATER

Dear Sirs: I feel it should be interesting news to readers of *The Nation* in the uptown areas of New York City to learn that a new theater presenting plays of social content has been organized in the Bronx, namely, the People's Theater Associates.

We have two one-act plays now in rehearsal scheduled for early spring production, to be followed by a full-length play with which we expect to open the fall season of 1936. Classes in puppetry, voice culture, technique of acting, and dancing are now being formed, free to those interested in developing such a theater as well as their own native ability.

We shall be glad to interview technicians, give critical readings to plays submitted to us, and give a hearing to experienced or talented amateurs for parts in our forthcoming productions as well as for membership in our classes.

All inquiries should be addressed to me at 1706 Davidson Avenue.

H. HERNE, Executive Director
New York, February 20

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LOUIS FISCHER, *The Nation's* Moscow correspondent, is back in the U. S. S. R. after a European tour. A series of articles, Arms Over Europe, of which the one on Poland in this week's *Nation* is the eighth, has presented the European scene in all its complicated and ominous detail.

EDITH ABBOTT has been a force in social work for many years. She has published books on immigration problems, women in industry, juvenile delinquency, crime and the foreign born. An editor of the *Social Service Review*, she has also since 1924 been dean of the School of Social Service Administration at Chicago.

M. E. RAVAGE is the newest addition to *The Nation's* roster of foreign correspondents. He will contribute an article about political events in that country from time to time.

RUTH BRINDZE will continue, under the title The Consumer Front, her regular bi-monthly page in *The Nation* in the interest of the forgotten consumer. She cannot, however, answer questions respecting the merit of specific products.

PETER ODEGARD has taught government at Columbia University, at Williams College, and at Ohio State University, where he now is. At the convention of the American Political Science Association during the Christmas holidays he led one of the most vital of the discussion groups, that on civil liberties.

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